MARIA;

OR THE

GENUINE MEMOIRS

OF A

YOUNG LADY

OF RANK AND FORTUNE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

The LIFE and ADVENTURES of JOE THOMPSON.

The Ways of Heaven are dark and intricate;
Puzzled in Mazes, and perplex'd with Error!
Our Understanding traces them in vain,
Loſt and bewilder'd in the fruitleſs Search;
Nor ſees with how much Art the Windings run,
Nor where the regular Confuſion ends.

ADDISON.

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PREFACE.

IF the Reader of theſe Volumes expects to find any thing in them of the Marvellous and Extraordinary, he will be miſtaken; ſince they contain nothing that ſurpaſſes Probability, conveyed in a Style and Manner the moſt ſimple and natural. That the Relation is a Fact, the Writer might produce the Teſtimonies of many noble and honourable Perſonages; and therefore he has not the Merit of having exerciſed his Invention in ſupplying Incidents to gratify the reigning Inclination for every thing which appears wonderful, and out of the Courſe of common Life.

The Adventures of our Heroine are ſufficiently intereſting to beſpeak the Attention of the Judicious, and thoſe who can feel for the unavoidable Misfortunes, or Accidents, Human Beings are ſubject to; and the Manner of thinking and Conduct of her and her Friends cannot fail of conveying proper Leſſons of Virtue and Humanity; whilſt the Behaviour and Fate of her Enemies will promote a Deteſtation and Horror of Vice, and may happily tend to amend and reform thoſe who are embarked in the Purſuit of falſe Pleaſures, and the Gratification of their inordinate Paſſions.

May that Glow of Benevolence, that Rectitude of Sentiment, that Patience under Affliction, that Reſignation to Divine Providence, ſo conſpicuous in the amiable Characters exhibited in the enſuing Pages, inſpire every generous Boſom, ſink deep

deep into the Hearts of every fair Peruſer, and have an Influence over their future Conduct! —This will give more real Satisfaction to the Author, than all the Praiſe that might reſult from a Diſplay of Genius and an Elegance of Style.---That Praiſe could only gratify his Vanity; but to be the Advocate of Virtue, and to promote Goodneſs of Heart and Life, are Purſuits that are worthy a rational Creature, and will ever give him true Satisfaction of Mind.

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MARIA.

CHAP I.

Protection afforded to a distressed Lady, and by whom.—She is carried to a Place of Safety.—Her Treatment there.

ONE inclement Night, in the variable Month of *November*, as the kind, the benevolent Mr. *Worthy*, a Gentleman of large Fortune and enlarged Heart, who had spent some agreeable Hours with his intimate and disinterested Friend, Mr. *Welldone*, a Man of equal Rank, Fortune and Character, was returning, attended by his Servant with a Lantern, from *Hill-Street*, where his Friend resided, to his own Habitation in *St. James's Square*, a sudden Storm of Wind, accompanied with a severe Shower of Rain, obliged him to stand up,

ſome time, under a Gateway, from which, at that Moment, he happened to be not very diſtant. As the Night was extremely dark, he did not at firſt perceive any other Perſon had taken advantage of that Shelter; but at length, caſting his Eyes around, he diſcovered, by the Light of the Lantern, at the other Entrance, a Female Appearance, the Neatneſs of whoſe Attire, and whoſe Elegance of Air, would alone have claimed his Attention, if his ſtronger Impulſe to pity Diſtreſs had not been alarmed by two or three repeated Sighs, and ſome Expreſſions of Grief, ſo broken as to be almoſt inarticulate, which eſcaped this fair Tenant of ſo rude and inhoſpitable a Retreat, through which, though a Shelter from the Rain, the bleak North-Wind howled with increaſing Violence.

The Experience Mr. *Worthy* had acquired, by forty Years Acquaintance with Mankind, did not permit an immediate Interruption of the fair Complainer, though he found the Tenderneſs of his Nature affected, till he diſtinctly heard, in Accents not uſed by vulgar Lips, and whoſe gentle Harmony breathed in Uniſon with his Soul, theſe plaintive Words. "Alas! Stranger as you are to "Compaſſion, cruel, inhuman Man! could "you for a Moment ſee this Wretch "once ſeemingly the Idol of your Fondneſs, "and the Joy of your Eyes, oppreſſed with "Grief, and unknowing where to reſt her "Head; ſurrounded with every Horror that

"can

" can ſhock the Human Breaſt, that can " terrify the Sex, to which I have been yet " no Diſgrace; you, you yourſelf, obdu- " rate as you are, would ſure ſtill ſhield " me from Infamy and Ruin: But, alas! " returning to you would be worſe than " what I now endure! Oh! gracious Be- " ing, whoſe watchful Providence ſuperin- " tends the loweſt of thy Creatures, look " down with Compaſſion upon the injured, " the loſt, the ruined *Maria!*"

The laſt Words of this mournful Soliloquy were ſucceeded by ſuch a Burſt of Sighs and a Torrent of Tears, that, though Force ſeemed to be uſed for their Suppreſſion, were plainly enough perceived by Mr. *Worthy*, to excite all that Compaſſion which was ſo natural to him. A Moment (and but a Moment it was) he reflected upon the Tricks of the Town, and the Arts made uſe of to deceive the Unwary. The next Moment he reſolved to offer his Protection to a Woman who ſeemed ſo greatly to ſtand in need of Aſſiſtance; and, before he had formed any Plan for the Execution of his generous Intention, accoſted her in the kindeſt Manner, and told her he could not help overhearing her Complaints, and that he ſhould be extremely pleaſed if ſhe would let him know in what Manner he could reap the Pleaſure of being of ſome Comfort and Service to her in her Affliction. The Lady, who had really been ſo intent upon her Griefs and diſmal Situation, as not to have

obſerved any Perſons to be ſo near her, (to which Ignorance the Pattering of the Rain and the Roaring of the Wind had contributed) at theſe kind Expreſſions turned towards the Speaker; but yet with a Countenance and Manner that plainly betrayed the Diffidence ſhe entertained of him, unknown, and in ſo odd a Situation. The Servant advancing the Lantern, however, gave her a Glimpſe of Mr. *Worthy*'s Face, which, unleſs every Appearance of Goodneſs in the Human Countenance can be feigned, was ſuch as baniſhed from her Mind all Suſpicion and Diſtruſt. Tremblingly then ſhe anſwered, whilſt the pearly Drops deſcended from the fineſt Eyes that perhaps ever wept, "Is it poſſible, oh! is "it poſſible, that Pity and Humanity ſhould "ever again be extended to me! Oh! Sir, "if, without any baſe and ſelfiſh Views, "you can ſuccour the Diſtreſſed, ſhelter a "very unfortunate Maid from the Horrors "of this Night, and from the Miſchiefs ſhe "dreads in a Situation to which ſhe never "expected to be expoſed!" The univerſal Tremor that ſhook her delicate Frame, whilſt ſhe pronounced theſe Words, and a Face ſuffuſed with a Crimſon Glow, were to Mr. *Worthy* ſtrong Confirmation ſhe was a Perſon that deſerved his further Notice: Nor could he fail admiring a Harmony of Features, and a Dignity of Mien, which a diſordered, though genteel Dreſs, could not totally obſcure. Yet, with all his Generoſity,

roſity, many Difficulties ruſhed at once into his Mind, as to the Manner of beſtowing his Charge. It was improper, upon ſeveral Accounts, to carry her to his own Houſe; and a common Lodging-Houſe or Inn ſeemed to be as dangerous, almoſt, as the Place ſhe was already in. A few Moments he ſtood muſing, whilſt the unknown Fair-One, with downcaſt Eyes, and repeated Sighs, ſeemed to wait her Sentence from his Lips. At length, turning to his Man, he ſaid, "*Thomas*, your Wife is an honeſt, virtuous "Woman, I believe, and will oblige me "by taking this young Lady into her Charge "till To-morrow, when I will provide "her with a Retreat more ſuitable to the "Conceptions I have of her Merit." *Thomas* anſwered in the Affirmative; when, turning to the Lady, Mr. *Worthy* continued, "Madam, for ſome Reaſons I cannot this "Night carry you to my own Houſe, where "you might be attended to my Satisfaction; "for I have already conceived for you a "great Eſteem, and will in this Exigency "ſupply the Place of a Father, and aſſu-"redly protect you from all Danger. This "honeſt Man's Wife is an induſtrious, "cleanly Woman, and will make your So-"journ with her this Night as eaſy as poſ-"ſible: Give me your Hand, Miſs, and "let me conduct you to an Aſylum, where, "at leaſt, you may be aſſured of Reſt and "Safety. To-morrow I will endeavour to

" put you into a more eligible Apart-
" ment."

The Rain was now near ceaſed, and, with a Heart that ſeemed ready to burſt with ſtruggling Paſſions, ſhe gave her Hand to Mr. *Worthy*, who in ten Minutes brought her to the Door of the Houſe where Mrs. *Couſens* lodged, and without Ceremony introduced her into the good Woman's Apartment; who, ſurpriſed, and yet tranſported at the Honour conferred upon her, promiſed, with all the honeſt Aukwardneſs of unpoliſhed Gratitude, to be very attentive to the Lady's Eaſe and Entertainment. She was ſtill the more inclined to diſcharge her Truſt with Pleaſure, as Mr. *Worthy* privately ſlipped ſome Gold into her Hand, and ordered her to accommodate her Gueſt with every thing ſhe required, or ſtood in need of for her Refreſhment and Recovery from the Fatigue and Hurry of Spirits ſhe had undergone. Then, taking his Leave of the Lady, with a Look of compaſſionate, benevolent Kindneſs, he departed, followed by the Eyes of the obliged Fair-One, which ſpoke, more emphatically than the moſt energetic Language, her Senſe of ſo much Goodneſs and Generoſity. Left alone with Mrs. *Couſens*, that good Woman ſurveyed her with a Reſpect, which indeed her Looks and Appearance ſeemed to beſpeak. She was ſomewhat above the middle Stature, her Shape perfectly delicate, and her Air majeſtic; her Complexion was fair as could be well

well conceived, and, but for the roſeat Lips, might have been counted rather of the paleſt; her Hair, Eyebrows, and Eyes, were black as Jet; her Arms admirably proportioned; but the Sweetneſs of her Countenance diſplayed ſo many Charms, as could not fail of captivating every Beholder. Her Voice breathed the gentleſt, ſofteſt Harmony, and her Addreſs appeared ſo winning and engaging, that to have ſuppoſed ſhe had any Enemies muſt have appeared ridiculous, had not her preſent Diſtreſs evinced ſo uncommon a Fact. She was diſtreſſed in a White Sattin *Trolloppee*; a fine *Bruſſels* Lac'd Cap adorned her Head; ſhe wore a Cardinal and Hat; but her whole Attire ſeemed greatly diſordered, and the Careleſſneſs expreſſed in fixing every Part of it, was no improper Mark of the diſtracted Mind of the Wearer. Her Age was viſibly about twenty Years, tho' the ſolemn Air which Affliction impreſſed on her Features may be ſuppoſed to have much obſcured the vivacious Glances of Youth and Beauty.

Mrs. *Couſens*, who was a notable Talker, as well as a good Houſewife, (Characters often united) would have known the very Bottom of her Story at once; to a Relation of which ſhe encouraged her by expatiating, in her Way, upon the Goodneſs and the Riches of Mr. *Worthy*, with which ſhe interſperſed the Hiſtory of his whole Family; but ſhe was awed into Silence, in that Particular, by a ſuperior Kind

of Reſerve, which yet was accompanied with ſuch winning Good-Nature, as to repreſs her Curioſity without giving her Pain. Seeing her Charge wanted dry Stockings and Shoes, ſhe ſupplied her with both from her own Wardrobe, together with a Bed Gown, and other Matters of which ſhe ſtood in need; and having got and toſſed up as genteel a Supper as ſhe could at that Time of Night procure, ſhe made up a Bed, and conducted her Gueſt to it, not without a Thouſand Exclamations upon her tranſcendent Beauties, and her engaging Returns to her Kindneſs, interrupted now and then with certain Execrations againſt thoſe who could injure ſo lovely, ſo innocent a Creature. Here we will leave them to their Repoſe, and return to the good Mr. *Worthy*, who by this Time, we may ſuppoſe, was got home to his Family, inly pleaſed with this Opportunity of exerciſing his Humanity.

CHAP. II.

Character of the Lady's Protector, and his Family.—Bad Effects of cauſeleſs Jealouſy.

MR. *Worthy*, to a Perſon that needed no Art to ſet it off, joined all thoſe good Qualities which diſtinguiſh the Man and the Chriſtian. His Eſtate was upwards of

of 6000l. *per Annum*, and his Œconomy in the Management of it, together with the Deaths of ſome rich Relations, had veſted a conſiderable Sum of ready Money in his Hands, moſt of which, like a good Subject, he had lent to the Neceſſities of the Government. He was a tender, indulgent Huſband and Father, a kind and generous Maſter, a warm and ſteady Friend: And, in return, his Family adored him, and he lived in the high Eſteem of all who were ſo happy as to ſhare his Friendſhip or Regard. He was, at this Time, near fifty Years of Age, of which he had been married twenty-ſix to Mrs. *Worthy*, and by her was the happy Father of a Son and a Daughter, who did not ſhame their Parents.

Mrs. *Worthy* was the Daughter of a Right Reverend Prelate; yet, tho' ſhe brought her Huſband a very conſiderable Fortune, that was far from being the Motive to their Marriage. Love, on both Sides, formed their Union; and tho' ſhe had ſome Peculiarities in her Temper, that would have made ſome Men greatly unhappy, the Good Senſe of Mr. *Worthy* paſſed them over, more eſpecially as thoſe Foibles took their Riſe from her great Affection for himſelf. In ſhort, this excellent Woman, amiable in her Perſon, amiable in her Character, of refined Underſtanding, and full of Goodneſs, was unaccountably harraſſed by the *green-eyed Monſter*, Jealouſy, which ſeldom ſuffered her to enjoy a long Calm of Mind; and perhaps

became more tormenting, by no real Reaſon exiſting for her Indulgence of ſuch a Humour: For Mr. *Worthy* was not only incapable of Baſeneſs of any Kind, and leaſt of all of Infidelity to the Woman he even idolized; but avoided the moſt diſtant Opportunity of giving her any Ground for her Suſpicions. He was ſo very refined in his Behaviour to her, that he never was heard to praiſe a good Quality in any other Woman, in which ſhe was deficient, and admired every thing in which ſhe excelled: Her very Jealouſy he made a Merit to himſelf, as he knew it proceeded from the moſt ardent Love, and accordingly treated her Sallies of this Kind with the utmoſt Tenderneſs. But this Behaviour, which ſerved the more to endear him to her, added freſh Force to her Failing, and the more valuable he appeared in her Eye, the more poignant were the imaginary Wrongs for which ſhe truly ſuffered. This Paſſion had increaſed with Time, and now, in the forty-eighth Year of her Age, was ſtronger and more afflictive to her Family than in the Days of her Youth. She was ſo unaccountably whimſical, that, tho' ſhe could not bear the very Idea of doing Injury to any Perſon; tho' ſhe was unboundedly generous, and extenſively benevolent, ſhe frequently turned away her weeping Female Servants, becauſe their Maſter had caſually glanced his Eye upon them, or aſked them a Queſtion; yet ſhe always took Occaſion to provide them with other Places,

Places, and reward them in ſuch a Manner as made their Diſmiſſion a Favour, and conciliated their Affection to the unhappy Lady who turned them away. She accounted for ſuch a Conduct by a firm Perſuaſion that no Woman could withſtand Mr. *Worthy*'s Perfections; and therefore ſhe moſt ſenſibly pitied the poor Creatures, and was ſure, were ſhe in their Places, ſhe ſhould offend in the ſame Manner. This Diſpoſition had contracted greatly the Circle of their Acquaintance; ſhe kept little Female Company, becauſe ſhe would lay no Temptation in the Way of her Friends, and he accorded to this Reſtraint with Willingneſs, for fear of adding to her Diſorder; for a Diſorder it was, that in her approached the Borders of Lunacy. In another Point too ſhe differed from the generality of her Sex ſo affected: Her Reſentment, at the fancied Ills ſhe ſuffered, ſeldom broke out into Reproaches; but ſhe retired to her Chamber; whole Days and Nights locked herſelf up in Grief and Tears, till Mr. *Worthy*, by the moſt ſubmiſſive Conceſſions, and by even acknowledging Crimes he had never once imagined, brought her again to a Calm, and, as it were in Pity to him, to a Reconciliation. Happy for her that his Love was ſo deeply rooted in his Soul, his Temper was ſo mild and forbearing, and her Perfections ſo extraordinary, that they counterbalanced this great Weakneſs; ſhe was the

Subject

Subject of his tendereſt Compaſſion, and never moved his Anger.

Mr. *William Worthy*, the Heir of the Family, was twenty Years of Age, and at this Time making the Tour of *Europe*, after having acquired all the Knowledge that the Schools and Univerſity could furniſh, together with every polite Accompliſhment neceſſary to diſplay that Knowledge to the beſt Advantage. His Perſon was unexceptionably fine, and his Turn of Mind agreeable to the fondeſt Wiſhes of his Parents. He was about this Period expected to arrive in his native Country, and had lately been elected a Member of the Houſe of Commons.

Miſs *Henrietta Worthy*, eighteen Years of Age, might be taken rather for one of thoſe delightful Beings that exiſt only in the Imagination of the Poets, than really an Inhabitant of the World. A Painter might have copied a *Hebe* from her, without doing Injuſtice to the fabled Goddeſs. Roſy Health glowed in her Cheeks; melting Softneſs, with Rays of Innocence, lightened from her Eyes. To a Perſon of the middle Size, irradiated by each Charm and Grace, Nature had joined a Mind fraught with Perfections of every Kind, and Education had finiſhed this Object of Admiration, by adding all that could be acquired by a Female Genius, and many Arts and Sciences that ſeem to be engroſſed by the Men. She was equally adored by her Father and Mother; ſhe was the mournful Confidante of Mrs. *Worthy*'s ima-

ginary Sufferings, and the Repoſitory of her Father's Griefs on that Account. If a Favour was beſtowed on any one, it was thro' the lovely *Henrietta*'s Hands; and, as her Mother's Temper often incapacitated her from attending the Duties of her Station, ſhe, with the utmoſt Prudence, ſupplied her Place. Need I add, after all this, that ſhe was the Subject of general Admiration, and that the Sick and the Needy, all around, bleſſed the Hour ſhe was born; whilſt her Parents chief Pleaſure conſiſted in the Contemplation of her Virtues, and all the Servants in the Family were ready to ſacrifice their Lives for her Service? Indeed, the Men-Servants and a few of the Women had grown grey in the Service of Mr. *Worthy* and his Father; no Removes were ever made without very evident Occaſion, and it was never known that any of them ever voluntarily deſired to quit their Service: They married, begat Children, and thoſe Children were bred up under the hoſpitable Roof, to ſupply the Places of their Parents when Age or Sickneſs rendered them incapable of performing their Functions. Many of them had ſucceſſively been provided for upon good Farms, or in ſuch Poſts as ſuited them, and the Intereſt of the Family could procure. In fine, a Service in Mr. *Worthy*'s Houſe was looked upon as an Inheritance, and always proved ſo, from the Steward to the Groom, unleſs ſome very baſe and atrocious Crime rendered it otherwiſe.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Miſs Henrietta Worthy, *his Daughter, viſits* Maria, *the Lady before mentioned.---They are interrupted.---A ſtrange Scene.*

THE ſtrange Diſpoſition of Mrs. *Worthy* was the Reaſon that the good Gentleman had not thought it expedient to carry the poor *Maria* to his own Houſe, and to put her under the Protection of that Lady; tho' he was ſo ſtruck with her Voice and Perſon, as to have at once given her a Place in his Eſteem, and to look upon her almoſt with the Eye of a Parent. Happy Effect of Innocence and Beauty! They are the genuine and native Ornaments of the gentle Sex, and cannot be long counterfeited with Succeſs. They cauſe ſuch Impreſſions on our Minds, as diſpoſe us to ſudden and almoſt inſtantaneous Favour and Affection; we are ſoon ſmitten with them, and our Regard is laſting; whereas the Daughters of Art and Intrigue, when the tranſient Effect they have produced is over, leave nothing behind them but Diſguſt and Satiety. We treat them in our Reflections as Cheats and Deceivers, and wonder how we were impoſed upon by ſuch barefaced guileful Attempts at Qualities which their aukward Imitation too clearly proves the real Worth of. It happened, when Mr. *Worthy* came home, his Lady was not return-

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ed from a Visit to a neighbouring Countess of her Acquaintance; but *Henrietta* was in her Chamber, and as soon as she heard her Father was returned, went into the Dining-Room to pay her Duty to him. When they had been seated some Moments, "My Dear," said Mr. *Worthy*, "I have found out an Op-"portunity for the Exercise of that Benefi-"cence which makes so amiable a Part of "your Character." He then informed her of his encountering *Maria*, described her Person and Dress, and continued, "I need "not tell you, my Love, how chagrined I "am, that I could not bring the disconso-"late Damsel to my own House, where "she would have met with the Respect and "Attendance that her Rank seems to merit; "(for I am much deceived, if it is not "superior to the Vulgar) and that her Dis-"tress loudly calls for. My Age and Cha-"racter do not permit me to enter into the "Griefs and little Necessities of the young "Creature.—She is now at *Tom Cousens*'s "Wife's Apartment; for I could think, in "that Instant, of no Place more proper. I "hope she will use her with Respect; and "I would have you, my Daughter, take the "Chariot To-morrow, see her, and know "in what Manner we can serve her: If her "Situation requires a longer Absence from "her Friends than we are aware of, we "will contrive between us a Method of con-"veying her to my Seat in *Berkshire*, or that "in *Yorkshire*, where you may promise her

"an

" an Aſylum from every Danger: But, my " Dear, exerciſe your Judgment; for, tho' " I have no Suſpicion of an Impoſture, 'tis " right to guard againſt one; and, indeed, " ſo may Traps are laid for the Generous " and Unwary, in this wicked Town, that " we ought to inſpect narrowly into the " Pretences made uſe of to excite our Com- " paſſion and Charity: I ſhould be ſorry to " be the Dupe of my own eaſy Credulity: " 'Tis therefore abſolutely neceſſary that ſhe " ſhould let you know, you who are of her " own Sex and Age, who ſhe is, and the " Cauſe of her Diſtreſs, and if it ſhould ap- " pear genuine, you may promiſe her all " my Influence for her Redreſs." The Arrival of Mrs. *Worthy* prevented any Reply from Miſs, ſave that, with an Inclination of her Head, and a Smile, ſhe ſignified the Pleaſure this Commiſſion gave her, and her Aſſent to all her Father had dictated.

The next Morning, before her Father and Mother had left their Chamber, the lovely *Henrietta*, whoſe Good-Nature would not ſuffer her to loſe a Moment when the Service of a Fellow Creature was in Queſtion, got into the Chariot, and ſoon was conveyed to a Houſe at ſo little a Diſtance from her Father's. She was received with great Joy by Mrs. *Couſens*, whoſe Lodgings wore many Marks of her former Kindneſs; and the poor Woman was ſo eager to teſtify her Senſe of the great Honour conferred upon her by this Viſit, that ſhe became even troubleſome:

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The young Lady repreſſed her ſo obligingly, however, as to put a Stop to that perpetual Motion, her Tongue, and at the ſame Time not to give her Pain, by enquiring earneſtly after her Lodger, how ſhe had reſted, *&c.* "Reſt, alas! dear Lady," anſwered Mrs. *Couſens*, "ſhe has had no Reſt, Madam, "all Night; ſuch Toſſing and Tumbling "—ſuch Sighing and Groaning—ſo many "Tears—that, for my Part, I ſlept as little, "poor Creature, as herſelf;—and then ſo "many kind Expreſſions—ſo many Apolo-"gies for the Diſturbance ſhe ſuppoſed ſhe "gave me—Oh! Madam, ſhe is the beſt "and lovelieſt Creature that ever my Eyes "beheld, except your Ladyſhip; for you "have ſurely, ſurely, not your Equal."—At this Concluſion, conſcious of having ſaid ſomewhat extraordinary, ſhe dropped a low Courteſy, and even had drawn a Bluſh from Miſs *Henrietta*, which was all the Return ſhe made to her Compliment. "Pray, "Mrs. *Couſens*——good Woman!" ſays ſhe earneſtly, "let the Lady know I would "be glad to wait upon her, if ſhe is "ſtirring; but," added ſhe, "if ſhe is fallen "into a Slumber, (which from your Ac-"count of her reſtleſs Night may be the "Caſe) don't diſturb her; and I'll ſit and "chat with you till ſhe awakes." Theſe Words were ſcarce uttered before *Maria* opened the Door of the Bed-Chamber, and appeared before her Viſitor; they advanced to each other, and were mutually ſtruck with

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a pleaſed Surpriſe at the View of ſo many perſonal Charms and Perfections as were remarkably conſpicuous in them both. After the firſt Compliments, their Eyes ſtill riveted on one another, Miſs *Henrietta* nodded to Mrs. *Couſens*, who thereupon, tho' ſlowly, withdrew, all the Curioſity of her Sex being excited, to know what might paſs between the two Ladies; for Mr. *Worthy*'s Confidence in her, the Night paſt, had worked her Mind up to ſuch an Idea of her Importance, that ſhe thought it no little Diſparagement to her not to be admitted into this Cabinet-Council. When ſhe had left the Room, *Henrietta* took the lovely *Maria* by the Hand, ſaying, "Madam, I find, at firſt "Sight of you, my Heart intereſted in all "that concerns you; and I need not the "Commands of a Father, to enter into a "Friendſhip with a Lady of your apparent "Rank and Merit, and to proffer to you a "Participation of every Advantage I poſſeſs. "Alas! what brutal Wretch could be the "Cauſe of expoſing you to the Evils that "might have befallen you at ſo unſeaſonable "an Hour, and in ſuch an inclement and "ſtormy Night!"

Theſe Words were pronounced with an Accent and a Look of ſuch unaffected ſympathetic Concern, that *Maria* at once prepared to unboſom herſelf to her, and to make her the Confidante of her Story. "Ah! "dear Miſs," ſhe cried, whilſt the Tears ſtole gently down her Cheeks, "you can

"be

"be no other than the happy Daughter of "that benevolent and humane Gentleman, "whoſe Goodneſs placed me in this Aſylum, "after reſcuing me from a Situation the moſt "deplorable; whoſe Delicacy has farther "enhanced my great Obligations to him, "by ſending one of the moſt amiable of my "own Sex to enquire into my Story, and "to ſtudy my Welfare and Safety: Never "to be forgotten Kindneſs!—which ſtill "makes me think Virtue is not totally ba-"niſhed from amongſt Mankind, and that "I am ſtill under the Protection of that Al-"mighty Being, who regards the loweſt of "his Creatures with an Eye of Pity and Com-"paſſion! Oh! Miſs, without any real "Crime of my own, you behold before you "one of the moſt miſerable young Creatures "breathing. I will not be tedious in my "Relation, but endeavour to deſerve that "good Opinion you have beſtowed upon "me, and that Commiſeration of my Suffer-"ings which you have ſo generouſly ex-"preſſed. Yes," ſhe continued, ſhedding a Flood of Tears, which wonderfully melted *Henrietta*, "it is but juſt, after "ſuch undeſerved Favours, that I acquaint "my Benefactors, without Reſerve, of my "Hiſtory, to convince them, that, however "unfortunate, their Protection has not been "extended to Folly or Vice; that they have "not been deceived by Artifice: Yet my "Story has ſomething ſo uncommon in it, "that were I not encouraged by ſuch con-

"deſcending

" deſcending Tenderneſs in you, Madam,
" I ſhould ſcarce be prevailed upon to relate
" ſome Circumſtances, which, alas! ever
" humble me in my own Eyes, and could
" not fail of leſſening the Eſteem of a Perſon
" of leſs Generoſity and Good-Senſe than I
" am ſure you are poſſeſſed of. I muſt then,
" dear Madam, begin with the mortifying
" Confeſſion, that I neither know my real
" Name, nor my Parents: Circumſtances
" theſe, as I obſerved, that would much
" hurt me in the Opinion of a Perſon of
" leſs Humanity and Underſtanding. I" —
ſhe was proceeding, when, ſuddenly, the Door of the Room was opened, with ſome Precipitation, and, to the Amazement of *Henrietta*, Mrs. *Worthy* entered the Apartment, and, making up briſkly to her Daughter, who with *Maria* had riſen from their Seats at the Sight of her, exclaimed, " Oh!
" *Henrietta*, are you too leagued with your
" diſloyal Father againſt me?" and then ſunk down in an Arm-Chair, that fortunately ſtood behind her, in a Fit of Sighs and Tears truly pitiable. *Henrietta*, and the innocent *Maria*, who heard the Words *Daughter* and *Mamma*, and gueſſed the Relation the Lady bore to her new Friend, haſtened to her Aſſiſtance; for indeed ſhe was now fallen into a Swoon, with the Struggle of contending Paſſions. Poor *Henrietta*, whoſe Confuſion was extreme, on one hand was buſied in careſſing this dear, ſelf-tormented Parent, and on the other endeavoured to apologize,

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by Half-Sentences, to *Maria*, and to prepare her for a Scene which ſhe knew would ſoon open, as, at once, ſhe conceived her withdrawing herſelf would only add Fuel to Fire. Before Mrs. *Worthy* recovered, ſhe had juſt Time to ſketch out her Character to *Maria*, which ſhe did in the gentleſt Colours, and again and again expreſſed her Deſire that *Maria* would not be offended, and her Wonder that her Mamma ſhould come to the Knowledge of her Viſit. At length, the deluded Lady opened her Eyes, which were wildly caſt around, and diſcovered the two Ladies weeping over her; *Henrietta* tenderly ſupporting her Head upon her Boſom, and *Maria* chafing her Temples, and applying her Smelling-Bottle to her Noſe; whilſt Mrs. *Couſens* ſtood trembling behind, and dreading the Conſequences of a Meeting, the Cauſe of which ſhe too well conjectured. In a few Minutes, Rage reſumed its Place in Mrs. *Worthy*'s Boſom, and, puſhing the one and the other from her, and directing her Speech to *Maria*, ſhe ſaid, in an elevated Tone of Voice,—"Yes, Ma-"dam, you ſee your Triumph, and I don't "doubt but you enjoy my Weakneſs; but "can I blame you, when my own Daughter, "departing from the Precepts of a virtuous "Education, can become the Go-between "of her Father, and aſſiſt in heaping In-"juries upon the Head of a tender Mother!" —Then riſing, ſhe, in a ſofter Key, and earneſtly looking at *Maria*, continued, the

Tears

Tears ſtreaming from her Eyes, "But, "good God! what do I behold! ſuch Charms "—ſuch Innocence—Oh! dear young Lady, "did Heaven beſtow theſe Perfections upon "you for ſo vile an Uſe!—Your Looks "mean nothing but Goodneſs—Alas! why "have you ſo impure an Heart!—But, per-"haps, you are deceived.—Cruel Man, "could you betray ſuch Sweetneſs!—Oh! "Madam, you did not know, perhaps, he "was mine, by the deareſt, moſt intereſting "Ties; that he is the Father of this Girl, "and of a Son equal in Age to yourſelf.— "You weep, Miſs—But they are Tears "proceeding from this Detection!—Alas! "if you have Parents, think how *they* muſt "weep for your Defection from Virtue and "Honour, and for this ſhameful End of all "their tender Cares and Solicitude! Oh! "gracious Heavens!—why do I rave in this "Manner! Mr. *Worthy* is truly amiable, "alas! too much ſo for my Peace, or his "own Honour and Happineſs.—Yes, it is "all clear—all plain—a Midnight-Attack "upon his Levity—a concerted Scheme to "injure me in his Affections.—Wicked "Woman! can the Form of an Angel con-"ceal ſuch dreadful Corruption of Heart!" —She was going on, when *Henrietta*, (whoſe Action was imitated by *Maria*) falling on her Knees, beſought her to moderate her Paſſion—to hear Reaſon—to look upon the young Lady in a more becoming Light—to be perſuaded, that all ſhe fancied was the

Deluſion

Deluſion of her own Imagination; and that, did ſhe know *Maria*, ſhe would die with the Thought of having ſo unjuſtly treated her. *Maria*, trembling and pale, and loſt in Grief and Surpriſe, had only Courage enough to add, "Oh! dear Madam, how have I de-"ſerved ſuch Treatment from you? from "you, whoſe every Look, whoſe near and "tender Relation to this Lady, and her "good Father, raiſe up Sentiments of Re-"verence and Eſteem in my Heart that are "not to be deſcribed? Alas! dear Madam, "believe an innocent Maid, who, though "ſhe is greatly unfortunate, never harboured "any criminal Thought, no Idea that could "taint the Purity of a Virgin-Breaſt. Your "excellent Spouſe, Madam, indeed ſuc-"coured me in Danger and Diſtreſs laſt "Night, but I have never ſeen him ſince: "—He has only doubled his Generoſity, "by ſending his charming Daughter to en-"quire into my Situation, and to adminiſter "Relief to a Wretch abandoned, cruelly "abandoned, by thoſe to whoſe Protection "ſhe thought ſhe had a natural Claim." This Addreſs moſt ſurpriſingly awakened all the Tenderneſs and Generoſity of Mrs. *Worthy*'s Nature; her Eyes reſumed their natural Softneſs; by a kind of involuntary Motion, ſhe ſqueezed, at the ſame Inſtant, the Hands of *Maria* and her Daughter, and cried, "Ah! *Henrietta*, could I but believe "you, how dreadfully bad would my Con-"duct appear to me!—and yet—I am

"tempted

" tempted to give Credit to all this young " Woman ſays.—Sure I am in a Dream--- " a Dream of Horror and Wretchedneſs--- " But"--- (claſping her Arms round them both, and alternately embracing them)--- " ſure I muſt be right".---Then, after ſome Pauſe, thruſting them from her,—" Yes, " Mr. *Worthy* is too much adorned by Na- " ture and Education to be reſiſted :---Nor, " when I look at this young Creature, can " I wonder at his ſudden Attachment to " her.---Alas! why is he not conſtant!--- " why does he forfeit that Faith he plighted " to the Woman who adores him---who " has the only Right to his Affection!"--- At this Concluſion, the Demon of Jealouſy again took the ſole Poſſeſſion of her Soul. She alternately reddened and turned pale, and once again fell into a Swoon, attended with ſuch violent Agitations, as perfectly ſcared the weeping Aſſiſtants at this diſtracting Scene. " Oh! dear Miſs," exclaimed the unhappy *Maria*, " where ſhall I fly?---in what Place " ſhall I hide myſelf?---I, who am the " Cauſe, alas! already of ſo much Pain and " Inquietude to Perſons to whom I have ſo " many Obligations!" *Henrietta*, preſſing her in her Arms, beſought her to moderate her Sorrow, aſſured her that ſhe would never forſake her, and endeavoured to apologize for her unhappy Mamma, telling her ſhe was ſure, when ſhe recovered herſelf, ſhe would make her ample Reparation for her unjuſt

unjuſt Suſpicions, and the injurious Expreſſions ſhe had made uſe of.

When Mrs. *Worthy* was again brought to her Senſes, this forlorn Maid returned to her ſuppliant Poſture, repeated every thing ſhe had ſaid before, and added every thing ſhe could urge, to undeceive the Wife of her Benefactor: But all had proved ineffectual, if ſhe had not added, "Dear Madam, your "Diſturbance gives me greater Pain than "my own Misfortunes---my preſent un-"happy---truly unhappy Situation: But, "when you know my Story, perhaps you "will rather take me under your own Pro-"tection, than abandon me to Deſtruc-"tion.---Deareſt Lady, have Compaſſion "upon me.---Though my Heart ſwells with "unutterable Gratitude to your humane, "your generous Spouſe; yet let me never "ſee him more; let me cling round your "Knees, ſpeak Peace to your Boſom;--- "place me any where, where your own "Eyes may witneſs my Conduct and Be-"haviour alone.---Nay, if, alas! 'tis too "great a Bleſſing for me to enjoy, let me "never ſee again that excellent young La-"dy, who came here only on the Buſineſs "of relieving me from my Deſpair!" Here her Tears were redoubled, and ſhe ſunk down at Mrs. *Worthy*'s Feet, oppreſſed and overwhelmed with the Senſe of her wretched Condition.

This was too much for Mrs. *Worthy* to bear unmoved. She raiſed her in her Arms,

with the Aſſiſtance of her Daughter; and bedewing her Face with her Tears, "Amiable Creature," ſhe cried, "you have "convinced me, that if I am unfortunate, "you are not to blame.---You ſhall go with "me, and remain in my Apartment, till "we have heard your Story, and can pro"vide for your Relief:---*Henrietta* ſhall "not ſtir from you.---Gracious Heaven!" ſhe added, to herſelf, "if I have wronged "her, how ſhall I merit her Pardon! On"ly can I do it, by giving her that Place "in my Affections, to which ſhe ſeems to "have a Claim; to which ſhe already, de"lightful, lovely Maid! has made ſo ſwift a "Progreſs." Gratitude, now, was near producing the ſame Effect on *Maria* that Grief had worked before: And whilſt ſhe was kiſſing the Hand of this new Benefactreſs, *Henrietta*, tranſported with her Mamma's laſt Expreſſions, was ſhewing all the Marks of Duty and Acknowledgment to this dear, recovered Parent, that could poſſibly be diſplayed. It was now, for ſome Minutes, a Scene of Silence; in which the Eyes, on all Sides, were only employed. A thouſand Times Mrs. *Worthy* ſurveyed the Features of the unknown Maid, whoſe Charms were rather increaſed by the violent Conflicts ſhe had ſuſtained. One while ſhe admired the Delicacy of her Perſon, another, the ſweet Innocence that preſided in her Countenance; and from conſidering her as a dangerous Rival in her Huſband's Affections,

tions, ſhe inſenſibly entertained a Tenderneſs for her, little ſhort of that of a Mother. Though ſhe ſtill had ſome Doubts, as uſual, of Mr. *Worthy*, ſhe at once baniſhed every Suſpicion of *Maria*, and reſolved within herſelf to keep her under her own Eye, and, according to her own Requeſt, be a Judge herſelf of her Diſpoſition. Mrs. *Couſens* had, warned by a Motion of *Henrietta*, quitted the Room for ſome time; but was now called in to bring a Change of Apparel, which that young Lady had left in her Care at her firſt Entrance. It conſiſted of a rich Sack and Petticoat, with ſuitable Linen, *&c.* and both Mother and Daughter inſiſted upon helping *Maria* to dreſs; for her own Linen and Garments wore the Marks of the Diſorder ſhe came in. This *Maria* ſuffered with many Bluſhes, and great Confuſion; and when equipped, and her Heart a little more at Eaſe, diſcloſed new Graces in every Word and Action, not unnoticed by her kind Aſſiſtants, who now both joined in their Encomiums upon her Beauty, and in the moſt encouraging Expreſſions to eaſe her of her every Affliction, and wipe out the Remembrance of the late diſtracting Incident.

When her own Clothes were packed up, Mrs. *Worthy* and her Daughter began to think how they ſhould proceed to their own Houſe; for as *Henrietta* came to make ſome Stay, ſhe had ſent home the Chariot when ſhe was firſt ſet down at Mrs. *Couſens*'s.

Sending that loquacious Female to order its Return was not thought proper; and therefore Mrs. *Worthy* desired her Daughter to step into her Chair, which was still waiting, and to go home and order the Chariot to come for her and *Maria*, and, as it was now far advanced in the Day, to keep her Papa Company till they were safely arrived in Mrs. *Worthy*'s Apartment; an Office *Henrietta* was pleased to execute, as she was eager to know how her Mamma became acquainted with her Visit to Mrs. *Cousens*, not in the least doubting her Father had informed her of his Adventure with *Maria*, tho' so contrary to his usual prudential Caution, and what he said when he intrusted her with her late Commission. The young Lady then, according to her Mother's Request, was carried home; and, till the Arrival of the Chariot, Mrs. *Worthy* was busied in bestowing the tendereſt Marks of Kindness on her lovely Charge, in Acknowledgments to Mrs. *Cousens* for the Care and Attention she understood by *Maria* she had shewn to her, accompanied with a Reward, which, joined to what Mr. *Worthy* had given her the Night before, she could not but consider as a noble Recompence for her Pains.

Thus this fair Stranger, by the peculiar Sweetness and Innocence that dwelt about her, had, in so short a Space, captivated a whole Family, and even disarmed Jealousy itself of its Fury. But as to the latter Effect, it must be considered, that Mrs. *Worthy*'s

thy's Turn of Mind, the natural Goodneſs and Benevolence of her Heart, co-operated, and aided thoſe perſuaſive Charms which were capable of ſo inforcing the artleſs Eloquence and ſoftening Action of the lovely, injured Mourner.

CHAP. IV.

Wherein the Cauſe of the late Interruption is diſcovered.

MR. *Worthy* was at home, and waiting with great Expectation for the Return of his Daughter; nay, with a kind of impatient Eagerneſs, that was ſurpriſing even to himſelf, and was apparent in the Pleaſure he diſcovered at her coming into the Room. "Well, my *Henrietta*," he cried, claſping her fondly in his Arms, "how does the "amiable Girl do? How have you diſpoſed "her? If I remember right, ſhe is like "my little Angel; and that accounts for "the Prejudice I have conceived in her Fa-"vour. I hope ſhe has not deceived us, and "that you have found her worthy of your "Affection and Friendſhip."---"Dear Sir," the young Lady replied, "I am perfectly "enamoured of her---I love her almoſt as a "Siſter; but you took Care to ſend her "another Friend, who I believe by this "Time has her in her own Poſſeſſion.

"However, Papa, you cannot imagine "how much your Diſcovery of her to my "Mamma has diſturbed her, and with what "Difficulty it was that ſhe was brought to "conceive a favourable Opinion of her. "Indeed, dear Sir, it was a little cruel in "you to expoſe us to ſo much Diſtreſs, "whatever happy Conſequences you thought "might ariſe from acquainting her with your "Adventure." Mr. *Worthy* turned pale at what *Henrietta* ſaid, and at once conceived all the Diſturbance that his Lady had felt, and all that ſhe muſt have occaſioned. Starting from his Seat, he exclaimed,---"Good "God! Child, how could the dear Crea-"ture know any thing of the Affair? I "have not ſeen her ſince laſt Night, nor "once opened my Lips about it to her, nor "any one elſe: But come, tell me quickly "all that has happened, and leave to ſome "other Time the Conjectures by what Means "ſhe obtained her Intelligence. I fear, "alas! I fear, my Child, you have all in-"deed gone through too much!"

The charming *Henrietta* hereupon informed him of all that had paſſed, at which he was greatly moved, but ſhewed much Satisfaction at the Conqueſt *Maria* had made of Mrs. *Worthy*, ſaying, after all he looked upon it as a kind Providence to the unfortunate young Creature, though ſhe and her Benefactreſſes had ſuffered ſo much. He then expreſſed the moſt tender and affectionate Senſe of his Daughter's Goodneſs, and added,

ed, "My Dear, now the poor Maid is in "your Mamma's Hands and yours, I am "perfectly eaſy; and though ſhe had not an "Opportunity to tell you her Story, we "cannot but be convinced that ſhe deſerves "our Regard. Take Care, my Love, ſhe "wants for nothing: You know my For-"tune is at your Service, and is dedicated "to the Relief of unfortunate Merit, where-"ever it is diſcovered, and in whatever Sex "and Age." Theſe Words had but juſt paſſed his Lips, when Mrs. *Worthy*'s Woman brought Word that her Lady was indiſpoſed, and deſired to be excuſed from leaving her Chamber that Evening. This Notice gave rather Pleaſure than Diſturbance to the Huſband and Daughter, as they knew ſhe muſt be employed with her new Gueſt; and it gave them an Opportunity to make ſome Enquiries after the Method in which ſhe obtained her Knowledge of *Maria*. But all their Reſearches were fruitleſs: The Queſtions they aſked of *Tom Couſens*, and the reſt of the Servants, produced no Intelligence: That honeſt Fellow had never opened his Lips about *Maria*; and, if he had, as the reſt of the Servants knew their Lady's Humour, they would have been far from giving her the Pain ſuch Intelligence muſt occaſion her: So that they retired to Reſt, as ignorant of the Channel through which ſhe gained her Information, as they were at the firſt Moment of their Meeting. Before *Henrietta*, however, went to her

own Apartment, ſhe paid her Reſpects to her Mamma, who now received her in her uſual fond Manner, and again deſired her to excuſe the Pain ſhe had given her; but expreſſed her Concern that Things ſhould be ſo myſteriouſly conducted, when, had ſhe known of the young Lady's Diſtreſs, ſhe would have been the firſt Perſon to fly to her Relief. Poor Woman! ſhe had forgot that the natural Conſequence of her Temper, was to render every Perſon that loved her, fearful of adminiſtering, by the ſlighteſt Means, to her Diſtemper. They were juſt going to undreſs for Bed, Mrs. *Worthy* telling her Daughter, that *Maria* ſhould repoſe with her that Night at leaſt. *Henrietta* did not think it prudent to endeavour to ſift the Secret ſhe wanted to be diſcloſed, out of her Mamma; but as *Sally Price*, that Lady's Woman, was lighting her to her Bed-Chamber, ſhe, at a Diſtance, made ſome Enquiry of her, which, however, did not turn out to her Satisfaction, though ſhe perceived, with ſome Surpriſe, that the Girl's Face was covered with Bluſhes at the Queſtions ſhe put to her; and yet ſhe could have no Conception how ſhe could be at the Bottom of all the Miſchief that had ſo recently happened. It is neceſſary here to obſerve, that this *Sally Price* was the Daughter of a Tenant of Mr. *Worthy*'s, who, on the Marriage of Mrs. *Worthy*'s former Woman, had, agreeable to the Maxims of that benevolent Family, been taken to fill

fill the ſame Station about her Miſtreſs, near ſix Months before the preſent Incident, to which an unexceptionable Character in her native Village, and the Honeſty of her Parents, ſerved to recommend her. She was now turned of twenty-ſeven, was not diſagreeable in her Perſon, and had found out the Way to inſinuate herſelf into her Miſtreſs's good Graces, ſo far as to be the Confidante of all her imaginary Ills, and the Repoſitory of her Secrets. However ſhe had behaved at home, or in what Manner ſoever ſhe had concealed her natural Diſpoſition, ſhe was in reality governed by no Principle but Intereſt, truly eſteemed no Perſon but herſelf, and had a Turn for Intrigue which made her a very improper Servant in a Family that was in the unhappy Situation of Mr. *Worthy*'s. In the ſhort Time ſhe had lived in it, as ſhe found her Miſtreſs (ſuch is the Curſe of Jealouſy) fond of hearing all that paſſed in the Family, and was rewarded well for every Piece of Intelligence ſhe brought her; ſhe had Wickedneſs enough, ſometimes to invent Circumſtances that never occurred; and, though ſhe ſaw the Convulſions it put her Benefactreſs into, and the Injury it did to her Health, the Benefit that accrued to her ſtifled every Principle of Goodneſs and Humanity; and ſhe ſtill went on to inflame her to a Degree that worked her up to perfect Frenzy, to the Aſtoniſhment of the Family, who feared her Diſtemper increaſed with Time, and that ſhe

would ſoon render herſelf incapable of all the Offices of Life. As Mrs. *Worthy* ſought thus after Miſery, ſhe was impenetrably ſecret, and had never once betrayed her Intelligencer; ſo that, by virtue of her artful Behaviour to Mr. *Worthy* and his Daughter, the conſtant Reſpect ſhe laboured to diſplay to them, the good Character her Miſtreſs gave her, the affected Freedom ſhe uſed to her Fellow-Servants, and the good Turns ſhe ſtudiouſly contrived to do them, ſhe had as yet practiſed her Arts without occaſioning the leaſt Suſpicion of her being the vile Wretch ſhe really was.

It was this Wench (but not from her uſual Motives) who had produced the late Diſtreſs at Mrs. *Couſens*'s, though ſhe found herſelf extremely diſappointed in the Turn it had taken. In the ſhort Space ſhe had been in *London*, ſhe had had Time, from becoming ſo far neceſſary to Mrs. *Worthy*, to have been engaged in two or three Amours; and the Liberty ſhe was indulged in, gave her Opportunities enough of humouring her Diſpoſition that Way, to its full Extent. It was but a Week before the Adventure of *Maria*, that ſhe had contracted an Intimacy with a young Gentleman of moſt abandoned Principles, named *Caſwall*, tho' Heir to a conſiderable Fortune, who accidentally ſaw her at the Play, to which her infatuated Miſtreſs often ſuffered her to go, and even gave her Tickets for that Purpoſe. As he was thoroughly acquainted with the Sex, he

he ſoon ingratiated himſelf, and had overcome her flimſy Guard of Honour and Chaſtity, and even her more doughty one of Cunning and Deſign; and they now actually revelled in unlicenſed Freedoms, whenever they met together, upon a Promiſe, when his Father died, that he would ſettle an Annuity upon her for Life; which coſt him no Compunction to ſwear to, and which he never intended to perform. The uſual Place of their Meeting was at Mrs. *Couſens*'s, whoſe ſordid Diſpoſition led her to connive at any thing by which ſhe could get Money, and to conceal it from her Huſband, who ſeldom came to her Lodging till Night, and whoſe Honeſty ſhe knew was not to be ſhaken, or tempted to act in any thing contrary to the Credit and Happineſs of his Maſter's Family, in which Light he muſt have conſidered ſuch a Tranſaction. Here, then, they had their full Swing, and the very Morning *Henrietta* viſited *Maria*, they were ſtopped from going up Stairs to their uſual Rendezvous, by the Intelligence communicated by Mrs. *Couſens*, who miſſed no Circumſtance relating to her being brought by Mr. *Worthy*, or what ſhe had obſerved of the Diſtreſs *Maria* was found in, of which, as ſhe could have no perfect Knowledge, ſhe gave ſuch an Account as her own Imagination dictated. Fretted at her Diſappointent, yet pleaſed to the Life that ſhe had a new Tale for her Lady, ſhe reſolved at once to make her the Inſtrument

ment of clearing the Coaſt for her and her Paramour, and therefore enjoining Secrecy, ſhe immediately ran home, and in the moſt cunning Manner inſinuated what ſhe had heard, as a Matter that was diſcourſed amongſt the Servants, and added, but in the moſt diſtant Manner,—"Sure it can't "be true, as they whiſper, Ma'am, that "Miſs *Henrietta*"—Here ſhe pauſed.—"Miſs *Henrietta!*—what of my Daughter?" cried Mrs. *Worthy*, whoſe Jealouſy had at once taken the Alarm.—"Only, Ma'am—"but I fear it will diſturb you too much: "—Lord! how pale you look!—Shall I "reach you the Smelling-Bottle, Ma'am?" "—Tell me, I ſay, why you mentioned "my *Henrietta?* Is ſhe too leagued againſt "her Mother's Peace!—Sure never was "a more unfortunate Woman!"—This was the very Idea *Sally* wanted to inſpire; nor did ſhe ſuffer it to be loſt, but heſitating—with Pauſes and Reſervations enough, at length brought out, "that ſhe heard "Miſs *Henrietta* was gone to ſee this new "Rival." Mrs. *Worthy*'s Jealouſy, at firſt, often diſplayed itſelf in Paſſion;—full of the Wrongs ſhe fancied all conſpired to heap upon her, ſhe made herſelf ready in a Moment, ordered her Chair, and came to *Couſens*'s, as we have before related, to the Amazement at firſt of that Woman; though ſhe ſoon gueſſed, from the foregoing Circumſtance, who prompted her to the Viſit, and,

and, baſe as her Avarice made her, inly curſed the Wretch that could cauſe ſuch Diſturbance to Perſons for whom ſhe had the higheſt Veneration, and to whom ſhe had ſuch great Obligations. In her firſt Agitation ſhe was almoſt upon the Point of diſcovering *Sally*'s unworthy Conduct; but the Remembrance of her own Guilt immediately ſilenced the Reproaches of her Conſcience.

But *Sally*, who had been exulting in the Succeſs of her Project to remove *Maria*, (for Mrs. *Couſens* had hinted, ſhe hoped ſhe was to continue with her ſome time, and which indeed ſhe wiſhed might be the Caſe, as ſhe began to be embarraſſed with the Meetings at which ſhe had connived ſo long, and the Iſſue of which ſhe began to dread) and who, even in the Hurry her Miſtreſs went out in, had received the Recompence of a Silk Gown, was totally diſconcerted at the Appearance of *Maria* with her Lady, and the great Reſpect and Tenderneſs ſhe ſhewed to her, and, if Mrs. *Worthy* had not ſpoken to her with her uſual Affability and Condeſcenſion, muſt have judged, that her Intelligence had been diſcovered to be falſe, and that ſhe had been the Dupe of her own Cunning. From all theſe Fears, however, ſhe was relieved by the little Reſerve her Lady practiſed before her, and, by the Diſcourſe between her and the young Lady, ſoon gathered what Turn Affairs had taken. Her Thoughts, whilſt ſhe put on

the moſt reſpectful Behaviour to the new Comer, were now a perfect Chaos of Confuſion; ſhe already hated *Maria* in her Heart, and hearing her Lady mention her conſtant Abode with her, began to dread the Loſs of her own Importance, the End to her Artifices and diſloyal Gains, and perhaps, as *Maria* was in Diſtreſs, her ſucceeding to her Attendance about Mrs. *Worthy*. A Hag, revolving future Miſchief, could not have been more inly baleful; and Miſs *Henrietta*'s Queſtions worked her up to perfect Trembling and Confuſion, which ſhe with all her Art could not conceal. Glad ſhe was that Night gave her ſome Time for Reflection upon her Danger, and to form Schemes of Safety for herſelf, and further Miſchief to this excellent Family, and the innocent and kind-hearted *Maria*; which ſhe immediately reſolved to execute without the leaſt Remorſe or Compunction.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Friendſhip between Henrietta *and* Maria.---*A vain Attempt to prejudice* Maria.---*Viſit from the Earl of* Beaumont.---*Its Conſequences.*---*Noble Behaviour of Mr.* Worthy.---*Converſation between Mr. and Mrs.* Worthy.

SImilarity of Sentiment, equal Goodneſs of Heart, cemented by frequent Converſe, in a few Days produced ſuch a ſtrong and mutual Friendſhip between the two young Ladies, that they were perfectly inſeparable; and Mrs. *Worthy* herſelf manifeſted little leſs Affection than her Daughter for the amiable *Maria*. They loaded her with Ornaments and Preſents, and, from a certain Delicacy that ever accompanies generous Minds, forbore to put her upon relating her Story, which Mrs. *Worthy*'s Appearance at Mrs. *Couſens*'s had ſo unexpectedly interrupted. *Henrietta* ſeldom went abroad, as *Maria* ſhewed ſome Reluctance to accompany her, and the three Ladies paſſed their agreeable Moments in Reading, working at their Needle, Converſe and Muſic, in which laſt Accompliſhment *Maria* charmed both by her Voice and her Performance upon the Harpſicord, and in every thing ſhe undertook proved to her Benefactreſſes, that ſhe was Miſtreſs of all the Acquirements that could add to the native

native Excellencies of her Mind and Perſon. Her Attention to oblige and pleaſe Mrs. *Worthy*, met with the tendereſt Returns from that Lady, and Mr. *Worthy* contented himſelf with hearing from his Daughter the Progreſs of an Affection which he wiſhed would always continue, and willingly diſpenſed with the Attendance of Mrs. *Worthy* and her Gueſt at Meal-Times, as he then heard from that Lady without Interruption all that paſſed above Stairs. They deplored, however, the Kind of Reſtraint Mrs. *Worthy*'s Foible laid *Maria* and themſelves under, and wiſhed for ſome Opportunity that might give that young Lady the Liberty of a Houſe, where every one was devoted to her Service.

Thus a Week glided inſenſibly away, when Mrs. *Worthy*'s Woman brought her a Letter, telling her it came by a Gentleman who refuſed to leave his Name, or to be introduced to her. When ſhe opened it, ſhe found the Contents were as follow:

MADAM,

AS a Friend to a Family whoſe Kindneſs I have experienced formerly, I take the Liberty to acquaint you, that a young Woman you have taken lately under your Protection, is far from deſerving the Honour of your Regard. She was obliged to fly from a Family who had long eſteemed her, in Fear of Puniſhment, for putting them into the utmoſt Diſtreſs and Confuſion by

by her Practices. I hope you will, upon this friendly Notice, have Prudence enough to get rid of ſuch a Boſom-Enemy, who is the more dangerous to your Repoſe, as her Beauty and other Embelliſhments, together with her depraved Sentiments, qualify her remarkably for diſturbing the Peace I always ſhall be proud of hearing you and your Family enjoy.

I am,
Madam,
Taviſtock-Street, Your moſt obliged
Nov. 31, 1760. Humble Servant,
JOHN CRAFTS.

Henrietta and *Maria* were in another Apartment, when *Sally Price* gave her Miſtreſs this Letter; which ſhe, contrary to her uſual Policy, performed when ſhe was perfectly calm, and had the Uſe of all her reaſoning Faculties; and therefore, without imparting its Contents to that Confidante, ſhe folded it up with great Gravity, put it into her Pocket, and, without ſaying a Word, went in ſearch of the young Ladies, determined to hear from *Maria* the Relation of her Adventures, before ſhe formed any Judgment about a Letter ſigned by a Name of which ſhe could not remember that ſhe had ever heard the leaſt Mention. "I "am come, my Dear, to deſire," ſaid ſhe to *Maria*, "that you would now, if you "have Spirits ſufficient, tell the Story of "your Misfortunes; I long to hear by what

"Villainy

" Villainy you were reduced to the Diſtreſs " in which Mr. *Worthy* found you, and hope " you will not refuſe me that Satisfaction." *Maria*, not at all puzzled by this abrupt Requeſt, anſwered, " Madam, I am ready " to gratify your reaſonable Curioſity, and " that of this dear young Lady: It is " but juſt you ſhould be acquainted who the " Object of your Charity is, and I have " longed every Day to have your Commands " for that Purpoſe." " My dear *Maria*," replied Mrs. *Worthy*, " never wound our " Ears again with ſuch Expreſſions.— " Your Merit and your Beauty entitle you " to our Friendſhip and Regard, which, be- " fore I hear your Story, I am convinced " will be greatly increaſed by the Relation." Theſe Words were followed by an Embrace, which ſhe again and again repeated; and the lovely *Henrietta*, throwing her Arms about her Neck, proteſted ſhe had never taſted ſo much Happineſs as her Acquaintance had imparted. Mrs. *Worthy* then propoſed, as it was now Evening, that they ſhould retire to her Apartment, and gave Orders that no one ſhould interrupt them. They were paſſing from *Henrietta*'s Apartment to that of her Mamma, when their Attention was ſuddenly arreſted by the Sound of angry Voices, threatening in a haughty Tone, one of which they knew to be Mr. *Worthy*'s. Mrs. *Worthy* ſtopped hereupon, as did her Attendants, when they diſtinctly heard the following Words: " Believe me, Sir, your Good-

" neſs

" neſs and unſuſpecting Nature deceive you. " She is the worſt Wretch that ever came " into a Family; nevertheleſs, as I have ſo " long ſupported her, I promiſe you, if you " will deliver her up, no Injury ſhall be " done to her: I will only place her in ſuch " a Retreat as ſhall incapacitate her for any " further Miſchief: This I have a Right to " demand of you, and if you refuſe me, " the Law will force you to ſurrender her." —The Sound of this Voice had an immediate Effect upon one of the Audience: Poor *Maria* ſhrieked aloud, and would have fallen, but that her dear *Henrietta* caught her in her Arms, and, aſſiſted by her Mamma, hurried her into her Apartment, quite breathleſs, and ready to ſwoon. Wildly ſhe caſt around her fine Eyes, ſeemingly dreading they ſhould meet with ſome terrific Object. " Ah! dear Madam!—dear Miſs! " —ſave me—ſave me from the Fury of " that Wretch!—he will murder—he will " ruin me!—Oh! ſhield me—ſave me!" Thus ſhe ran on for ſome Time, whilſt her Companions, amazed and diſconcerted, hardly knew what they were about. Meantime they diſtinguiſhed, though in the remoteſt Part of the Houſe, that the Clamour below Stairs ſtill continued, and heard Mr. *Worthy* ſpeaking very loud, and in an Accent of Severity, to which he was generally a Stranger. Mrs. *Worthy* and her Daughter, eager to know what the Clamour below was occaſioned by, and yet unwilling to quit *Maria*,

Maria, who clung round them with an Action of the utmoſt Terror, were almoſt diſtracted; but having, with the kindeſt and moſt ſoothing Aſſurances, in ſome meaſure calmed that young Lady's Spirits, ſhe informed them that the Gentleman, whoſe Voice ſhe heard upon the Stair-Caſe, was the Man who had reduced her to the Situation which had ſo excited their Compaſſion; though he once ſhewed her every Mark of Regard and Affection; that ſhe was ſure ſhe was the Subject of his Enquiry, and, giving herſelf over for loſt, it had that Effect upon her which now gave her infinite Pain, as it ſeemed to have affected two Ladies, whoſe Peace and Happineſs were ſo dear to her. After reiterating their Aſſurances, that they would never part with her, or ſee her injured, Mrs. *Worthy*, locking them into the Chamber, went down into the Hall, and there found Mr. *Worthy* ſtill in warm Debate with a Gentleman richly dreſſed, advanced in Years, whoſe Servants and thoſe of Mr. *Worthy* had as it were ſurrounded their Maſters, and ſeemed to threaten one another on Behalf of their Principals. Mrs. *Worthy*'s Appearance cauſed a Sort of Truce, from the Reſpect her Preſence excited on one Side and the other. Mr. *Worthy* turning to her, ſaid, "My Dear, I wiſh you "had not heard this Uproar, or had been "prevailed upon to ſtay from the Scene of "it. But don't be diſcompoſed," ſeeing her turn pale; "I aſſure you I am not, and

"ſhall

" ſhall always be able to protect the Rites " of Hoſpitality from Violation, and to " chaſtiſe the inſolent Author of our Diſ- " turbance, by what Name or Title ſoever " diſtinguiſhed. It ſeems this is the Earl " of *Beaumont*, a Nobleman I have no Ac- " quaintance with, who has loaded the " young Lady under your Protection with " the moſt opprobrious Abuſe, and demands " to have her reſtored to him, after I relie- " ved her from the Diſtreſs in which he " moſt inhumanly involved her: But I am " certain ſhe can deſerve none of the vile " Epithets he has beſtowed upon her, and " will ſupport her, at the Hazard of Life and " Fortune, againſt his Attempts, and thoſe " of any other Perſon, till I am convinced " ſhe deſerves the Uſage he has threatened " her with. I am certain Vice and In- " trigue can never ſhelter themſelves un- " der an Appearance that one would think " would melt the moſt obdurate Heart " to Softneſs, and diſarm Revenge itſelf."

Mrs. *Worthy* hereupon joined in praiſing *Maria*, and at once adopted her Huſband's Sentiments; but, though at that Inſtant it did not ſhew itſelf, the Concluſion of Mr. *Worthy*'s Speech, the gentle Tone of Voice he uttered his Encomiums upon *Maria* in, had a moſt unhappy Influence on her Mind ſoon after.

The old Nobleman, finding neither Threats nor Soothings had any Avail, retired to his Chariot, not without ſome Menaces,

naces, which were returned by Mr. *Worthy* with the Contempt they deſerved. That Gentleman, then, ſeizing the preſent Opportunity of Mrs. *Worthy*'s Company, deſired her to retire with him to an inner Room, telling her he wanted to confer with her upon the Subject then on the Carpet.

When they were ſeated, and the Servants retired, "My dear Creature," Mr. *Worthy* ſaid, "help me, by your Advice, to diſpoſe "of the innocent Cauſe of all this Trouble. "Her apparent Excellencies, her Diſtreſs, "firſt intereſted me in her Behalf, and I "hope they have made you, as well as my "Daughter, her Friends. Lord *Beaumont* "claims her as a Perſon under the higheſt "Obligations to him; ſays, that he turned "her out of his Houſe to humble and "puniſh her; but that he had Perſons who "followed her, with Orders to ſee no In-"jury done to her; and that he intended "to have had her carried home again, when "ſhe was terrified and frightened ſuffi-"ciently; that his Quarrel to her was for "an Intent to ſeduce his eldeſt Son into a "Match with her, which was fortunately "diſcovered before it could be carried into "Execution; with many other Allegations, "which I muſt own carried more the "Marks of Malice than of Truth. If I "have any Skill, (and my Daughter con-"firms it) ſhe appears to be a Pattern of "Innocence and Virtue; and, as to his "Lordſhip and his Family, you muſt have

"often

" often heard their Character, by which I " underſtand their Manners and Practices " are ſo very corrupt, that, were it not for " their Rank and Fortune, few Perſons " of Honour or Virtue would aſſociate " with them. I would adviſe you to have " her conveyed privately to one of our " Country-Seats, in ſuch a Manner as to " elude Purſuit: Not that I fear his Lord- " ſhip, or regard his Menaces; but bad " and deſigning Men, who have Ability to " pay their Agents, are generally better " ſerved than People of Honour, and are full " of Schemes and Artifices to work their " Purpoſes: Therefore, I fear *Maria* will " not be ſafe within the Reach of his Know- " ledge." " Mr. *Worthy*," returned his Conſort, " conſidering the ſmall Time of " your Acquaintante with *Maria*, you " ſpeak and act very warmly in her Fa- " vour:—She is, I believe, a moſt deſer- " ving Girl; but I proteſt I think ſhe can " be no where ſo ſafe as under the Roof " where I dwell, and in my Society.—(Here ſhe caſt a Glance at Mr. *Worthy*, which fully explained her Meaning.)--" Sure " no Artifice can reach my Apartment; nor " can Force, if ſhe is not my Lord's Daugh- " ter, attack her there: Therefore I am " for her remaining with me, as her Re- " moval might throw her into freſh Dif- " ficulties, in which I myſelf perhaps might " bear a very intereſting Part. Behold " this Letter, Mr. *Worthy*, which was

" brought

" brought to me this Morning, and which " I ſuppoſe might be one of the Artifices of " her Enemies; but it made no Impreſ- " ſion upon me; only it determined me to " hear her Adventures, which ſhe was go- " ing to my Apartment to relate, when the " Sound of my Lord's Voice alarmed her, " and almoſt ſtupified her with Fear. I hope " you will then ſuffer her to remain with " me: I cannot be impoſed upon by Ar- " tifice, and you are able to protect us from " open Inſult: If her Story tallies with her " preſent Conduct, we ſhall all continue to " eſteem and love her; but ſhould one be " feigned, and the other artful, you your- " ſelf will not blame me if I diſcard her."

Mr. *Worthy* agreed in all ſhe ſaid; for he perceived the Motives of her Reluctancy to ſuffer *Maria* to go from her, and pitied her for them: But as to the Letter, he obſerved, that the Cruelty of the Deſign, when ſhe was removed from doing them Injury, to prejudice others againſt her, convinced him ſtill more, that *Maria* was an innocent injured Creature, and was treated with undeſerved Indignity and Cruelty.

When Mrs. *Worthy* joined the two Ladies, ſhe related all that had paſſed between Mr. *Worthy* and Lord *Beaumont*; but ſuppreſſed the Diſcourſe between the former and herſelf. To expreſs in Words the grateful Senſe *Maria* entertained of that Gentleman's Goodneſs, the many Ways ſhe diſplayed it to Mrs. *Worthy* and her Daughter,

ter, would be impoſſible: A thouſand times her Hands were lifted up to Heaven, for Bleſſings on his Head for ſo beneficent a Proceeding; and as often ſhe wiſhed her Life might be protracted till ſhe had in ſome meaſure made a Retaliation for their Benignity and Charity. In return to theſe Teſtimonies of her grateful Temper, the two Ladies overwhelmed her with Careſſes, and the elder even forgot, for that Moment, all her Doubts and Suſpicions.

CHAP. VI.

Artifices of Sally Price *to remove* Maria.---*She falls ſick.---The Grief of her Friends.---Generous Deſign of* Maria.---*Her Letters to* Henrietta *and Mrs.* Worthy.---*She quits their Houſe, and is betrayed.---Carried into the Country under falſe Pretences.*

THROUGH the Agitations poor *Maria* had undergone, tho' they were ſucceeded by a ſeeming Eaſe and Calm, ſo that ſhe retired to Reſt without giving any Suſpicion of her Health being affected, and was perſuaded to take Part of the Bed of her dear *Henrietta*, yet before Morning ſhe was ſeized with Complaints that indicated a Fever. In ſhort, the Workings of her ſuffering Mind had been ſo ſevere in the former Part of the Night, that her Bed-Fellow, when ſhe awoke,

woke, found her in great Commotion, and that a perfect Delirium had ſeized her. She raved upon Lord *Beaumont* and various other Perſons, whoſe Names Miſs *Henrietta* was a Stranger to—ſtarted—cried out they were coming for her!—talked of Daggers, Poiſon and Death—and then tenderly invoked Mr. *Worthy*, his Spouſe, and her dear, dear *Henrietta*, to come to her Aſſiſtance. The Grief and Surpriſe of that young Lady were too great for Expreſſion: She rung for her Maid, got up, called up her Mamma, and ſoon the whole Houſe was alarmed, and a Phyſician and Apothecary ſent for. The former, after examining the Pulſe, and aſking the uſual Queſtions, preſcribed what he thought proper, ſhook his Head in a dubitative Manner, and giving ſome Directions to the Apothecary, departed. The Apothecary, agreeable to the Doctor's Orders, took ſome Blood from her Arm, ſpoke certain technical Terms peculiar to his Profeſſion, talked of a Criſis, bowed, hemmed, and took his Leave, promiſing to bring what would ſoon ferret out the febrile Matter, and, promoting a Diaphoreſis, reſtore the animal Functions to their proper State, and ſpread Coolneſs throughout her whole Syſtem. The Draughts were ſent, adminiſtered, and in a few Hours the Patient appeared ſomewhat better, to the great Joy of the Family. Poor *Henrietta*, whoſe Concern was equal to her Affection, was raiſed to Life by this good News; but no Perſuaſion could remove her from

from the Bed-Side; and ſhe continued her Care and Aſſiduity for two Days and as many Nights, when Mr. *Worthy*'s abſolute Commands forced her to her own Apartment, to endeavour after that Repoſe which was become ſo neceſſary to her own Health. Mrs. *Worthy* had cloſely attended alſo in the Day-Time, and deputed her Woman to ſupply her Place in the Night: But whether her own imaginary Ills, or the Condition of poor *Maria*, had that Effect, ſhe was herſelf taken very ill on the fourth Day, and confined to her Bed, from whence ſhe ſent every Half-hour to know how *Maria* continued. Miſs *Henrietta* attended ſtill in the Day-Time, and her Place at Night was alſo ſupplied by *Sally Price*, who put on ſuch an Air of Tenderneſs and Affection for the Patient, that ſhe reigned, in a few Days after, ſole Directreſs of Affairs in her Apartment, to the entire Satisfaction of her Lady and Miſs *Henrietta*, and with the Approbation of Mr. *Worthy*, who never enquired of her after the ſick young Lady, without making her ſome Preſent for her Care and Solicitude. Every Maid in the Houſe attended the chief Nurſe in their Turns, and at length ſhe was pronounced out of Danger, and was capable, though ſtill too weak to leave her Bed, to afford ſome Moments Converſe to her Friend. Mrs. *Worthy*, though better, was confined to her Chamber, and a fairer Opportunity could never have preſented for this wicked Wench to carry the

Shemes ſhe had meditated into Execution. At firſt ſhe confined herſelf to dark Hints and Surmiſes whenever ſhe waited on her Miſtreſs, in relation to her Maſter and *Maria*; expatiated on his Generoſity to herſelf, and diſplayed before her Eyes every Piece of Money he gave her; wondered, as it were, by Fits and Starts, how he came to have ſuch a Regard for the young Lady, and hoped it could proceed from nothing but a Motive of Humanity. Afterwards ſhe painted, in the ſtrongeſt Colours, the Anxiety he expreſſed for *Maria*'s Recovery, and frequently added Words invented by herſelf, which could ſcarcely admit of an innocent Meaning. She alſo informed her how earneſtly *Maria* enquired after that Gentleman, what Pleaſure lightened in her Eyes whenever he was mentioned, and, at the Cloſe, would ſay, "On my Conſcience, Madam, I be-"lieve the poor Lady is in Love with my "Maſter.—Sure her being kept up in your "Apartment from him could not be the "Cauſe of this Illneſs?" Theſe and a thouſand Arts ſhe put in practice to alienate Mrs. *Worthy* from her Gueſt, and had the infernal Satisfaction, at length, to induce her to ſuch a Train of Thinking as made cruel Ravages upon her own Health, and rendered her very cool and indifferent to what concerned that of *Maria*.

When Mrs. *Price* had effected this, ſhe plied her other Battery againſt poor *Maria*: When they were alone, ſhe deſcribed to her the

the Diſtraction of the Family on account of her Lady's Illneſs; and when ſhe aſked her the Meaning of it, at length ſhe exclaimed, "Alas! my dear Madam, ſhe is a moſt excellent Woman, but unaccountably jealous. Would you think it, Madam?—ſhe imagines there is ſome ſecret Concert between my Maſter and you; and if a Method is not ſoon found out to diſburthen her of that (I'm ſure ill-founded) Imagination, it will certainly be the Death of her. She tells me all ſhe ſuffers, and yet inſiſts upon Secrecy; but, alas! I am ſo confounded by her Diſtreſs, that I cannot help telling you of it. Perhaps the Generoſity and Goodneſs, Madam, ſo natural to you, may fall upon ſome Means to ſave an innocent Family that loves you from Deſtruction." At the Cloſe of ſuch Diſcourſe ſhe would ſhed Tears, and deplore her Fate, that ſhe was forced to be Witneſs of ſo many Misfortunes to Perſons ſhe ſo much eſteemed and reverenced.—"Oh! Madam," then ſhe would add, "I beſeech you not to mention theſe Things to Miſs *Henrietta*: Her Affection for you is ſo perfect, that ſhe would ruin me at once for daring to give you ſo much Pain, which, God knows, I only do in hopes you might think of ſome Way to ſave my poor Lady's Life and Reputation." She never dwelt too long upon this Subject with either of the Ladies, and, when ſhe reſumed the Diſcourſe, had Art enough to do it,

ſeemingly, at their Bidding. *Maria*, who ſeldom now had thoſe kind Meſſages ſhe was uſed to from Mrs. *Worthy*, and who remembered the Motive for her firſt Viſit to her, believed every Word of what *Sally* ſaid; and notwithſtanding the Endearments that paſſed between her and her *Henrietta* were infinitely tender, the Generoſity of her Mind, her compaſſionate Diſpoſition, induced her to revolve over every Scheme that might probably reſtore Peace to a Family ſhe ſo greatly loved. "What ſignifies it," ſhe would ſay to herſelf, "the Integrity and Innocence "of my Heart, even amongſt the beſt of "People? By one, at leaſt, I am ſuſpect-"ed, and my Abode under this Roof em-"bitters every Moment of her Life. Alas! "why muſt I infect this kind Family with "my Misfortunes? It were baſe and un-"grateful not to withdraw myſelf from a "Place where my Preſence cauſes ſuch Diſ-"turbance, and may be productive of the "Death of the beſt of Women, the Mo-"ther of my dear Friend, the beloved Wife "of the Man who reſcued me, and pro-"tects me from Deſtruction! No, *Maria*, "whatever thy Fate may be, let not thy "private Intereſt or Advantage render other "Perſons unhappy. The Barbarian who "turned me into the wide World did not "ſtrip me of the few Guineas I had in my "Purſe: They ſtill remain there untouch-"ed: They may ſupply the Wants of Na-"ture till I can get ſome Employment,

"whereby

"whereby I may ſupport myſelf free from "Injury to others, and Pain of Mind to "myſelf!"—When ſhe began to ruminate thus upon this Expedient, ſhe ſoon became enamoured of it; and the Generoſity of it carried her at once to plan its Execution. Poor Lady! her Confidante was the vile *Price*, whoſe Cunning had aimed at bringing her to ſuch a Reſolve. *Maria* aſked her, if ſhe knew any honeſt Perſon, at ſome Diſtance from Mr. *Worthy*'s, where ſhe could be ſecretly lodged and boarded till ſhe otherwiſe provided for herſelf. Now, this wretched Creature, finding her thoroughly bent upon her Project, after expatiating upon her Generoſity, ſaid all ſhe could to diſſuade her from it; ſhed Tears in Abundance at the cruel Neceſſity ſhe ſeemed reduced to, and deſired her to reflect what Grief Miſs *Henrietta*, and even her Lady, would feel after her Departure. *Maria*, as ſhe truly imagined, was not to be moved; and when ſhe found that, ſhe, as it were by Over-Perſuaſion, conſented to debate with her in what Manner ſhe ſhould leave the Houſe, and where ſhe ſhould go. She told *Maria* ſhe had a Couſin, who was a Farmer's Wife near *Deptford*, that ſhe could confide in; and that, as ſhe was abſolutely reſolved, ſhe would ſend Word for her Huſband to fetch her down, where ſhe might be ſecure and eaſy as long as ſhe pleaſed; and if ſhe wanted more Money than ſhe was at preſent poſ-

ſeſſed of, ſhe would herſelf ſupply a Lady, for whoſe Virtue ſhe could not but have the greateſt Veneration as long as her own laſted. The great Difficulty was, to get rid of Miſs *Henrietta*, who, now her Friend was able to ſit up and walk about her Chamber, was ſeldom abſent long from her, and in all Probability would in a few Nights again become her Bed-Fellow, which would render her Flight impoſſible. Unluckily, two Days after the definitive Reſolution was taken, and *Sally* informed *Maria*, her Couſin the Farmer was come to Town, had agreed to receive her, and was at the *White-Horſe* in the *Hay-Market*, Miſs *Henrietta* was obliged to pay an annual Family-Viſit to Mr. *Welldone* with her Father; for Mrs. *Worthy* was ſtill in a very dejected Situation, and could not accompany them. That young Lady, after taking a tender Adieu of *Maria*, who, reflecting ſhe ſhould perhaps never ſee her more, could not refrain ſome Tears which ſtole down her Cheeks, and which the other, aſcribing to her Weakneſs and her Affection, expreſſed her great Senſibility at, ſet out with her Papa for the Place of her Viſit.

Maria and *Sally* now left to themſelves, that abandoned Slut, who had contrived by every cunning Method not to be ſeen in aiding the young Lady's Elopement, and who inly rejoiced at the Dexterity with which ſhe had contrived to remove the Cauſe of all her Apprehenſions, informed her, that a young

young Woman of her Acquaintance would wait at the Door to receive her, and convey her to her Couſin that very Evening, when ſhe knew ſome of the Servants would be waiting at Mr. *Welldone*'s, others differently employed, and that the Porter would not be in the Hall. *Maria*, giving her repeated Thanks for her Kindneſs, and promiſing to reward her if it was ever in her Power, dreſſed herſelf in the Habit ſhe was firſt found in by Mr. *Worthy*, not thinking it proper or decent to take any thing that had been beſtowed upon her by the generous Family; and having wrote the following Letters, with a Heart ſwolen with Grief, and Eyes moiſtened with Tears, gave them to *Price* to be delivered as directed, making that artful Creature acquainted with their Contents. One was to Mrs. *Worthy*, the other to Miſs *Henrietta*, as follow:

Honoured Madam,

THE Pain you feel on my Account, the Diſturbance that Uneaſineſs muſt give to your excellent Spouſe and amiable Daughter, have determined me to leave your Houſe and Preſence, and to fling myſelf upon the wide World. It would be baſe and ungrateful in a Perſon who is ſo much obliged to you, and who ſo tenderly loves you, to know herſelf the Cauſe of ſo much Grief, and not to endeavour, by her Abſence, to remove it. Believe, dear Madam, that I am not capable of any Deſign againſt your

Peace, and that I am really innocent, tho' greatly unfortunate.

I am,

Honoured Madam,

Your moſt affectionate,

and moſt obliged

humble Servant,

MARIA.

My dear, dear HENRIETTA,

HOW ſhall I apologize for the Step I am taking, and in which my Weakneſs would not ſupport me, did not the Generoſity of my Nature give me all its Aſſiſtance! You, whoſe Dignity of Soul and Sentiment I have ever ſo much admired, will, I hope, conceive more than I can ſay, and excuſe me both to yourſelf and your worthy Parents. Alas! what does your *Maria* feel in this Moment, when ſhe is ſevering herſelf, and perhaps for ever, from a Friend with whom ſhe has paſſed ſo many endearing Moments, and from whom ſhe has received ſo many invaluable Favours! But I was deſtined to Unhappineſs and Misfortunes! No kindly Influence preſided at my Birth; no Mother's Care directed my infant Years, or tenderly watched over my Steps! and, when reſcued from Miſery by your excellent Father, and careſſed by my amiable, my benevolent *Henrietta*, cruel Fortune compels me to fly their hoſpitable Manſion, her protecting Arms, and once more to tempt the wayward Compaſſion of Strangers,

gers, and all the Horrors attendant on a wandering, forlorn, and abandoned Virgin. Oh! dear Friend, I could not bear to be outdone in Generoſity and Gratitude: In theſe, I hope, I ſhall be always rich! Could I ſee the Pain and Anxiety your dear Mamma endured on my Account, and not remove myſelf from ſo calamitous a Scene? Could I bear to ſee that Family in Affliction that have ſo benevolently ſuccoured and protected me? No, *Maria*'s Soul, thank Heaven! is not of ſo baſe, ſo unnatural a Caſt. But the principal Objection to this Proceeding was my Separation from you, for whom my Heart feels all that the moſt refined Friendſhip can produce: I lament that I have been with-held from telling you my Story, ſince I am ſure it would have prevented your entertaining hereafter any Prejudices which the Arts of my Enemies may endeavour to inſpire. I carry with me, deareſt Miſs, a Heart full of Gratitude to your benevolent Papa, to the excellent Mrs. *Worthy*, and to yourſelf: Wherever Providence diſpoſes of your *Maria*, ſhe never will ceaſe, with uplifted Hands, and an innocent Heart, to offer up her Prayers to the Supreme Being for the Welfare of ſuch amiable Perſons, whoſe Favours ſhe never can forget. Excuſe me that I have left behind me all that your Mamma's and your Kindneſs have beſtowed upon me: They are too ſuperior to the State I am likely to fall into; and ſince I could not remain with you, I think I have

I have no Right to carry them away. Your dear Reſemblance in Miniature is the only Jewel I could not part with: Permit it to be the Companion of my Flight and my Solitude, ſince it will ever preſent to my tearful Eyes the Features of my deareſt Friend. Adieu, my much-loved *Henrietta!* —Adieu—I fear—for ever!

MARIA.

When ſhe had performed this laſt Taſk, with trembling Knees, and Eyes ſwimming in Tears, yet weak with the Illneſs ſhe was juſt recovered from, ſhe took a tender Farewel of her abominable Temptreſs, looked round the Apartment with inconceivable Anguiſh, and, following her Directions, deſcended the Back-Stairs, and was received by a decent Female, on whoſe Arm, ſupported, in Silence ſhe traverſed the Diſtance from Mr. *Worthy*'s Houſe to the Inn, where ſhe was to be met by the Farmer, *Sally*'s Couſin. Alas! ſhe was flying to worſe Hands than ſhe, poor deceived young Creature! imagined: In the Guiſe of a Farmer, ſhe was accoſted by the wicked *Caſwall*, who was to be an Accomplice in all the Treacheries of *Sally Price*. With a ſpecious Air of Honeſty and Frankneſs, the ſuppoſed Farmer handed the deſtined Sacrifice into a Room, where he expatiated upon his Regard to his *quondam* Couſin, and the great Reſpect that, upon her Account, he ſhould ſhew *Maria*; ſo

that the lovely Maid began to think herſelf very happy in falling into ſuch ſeemingly hoſpitable and friendly Hands. He then deſired to know, if ſhe would venture to lie that Night in the Inn, and ſet out early in the Morning, or whether ſhe would ſet out directly, which he thought would be the beſt Way to prevent any Enquiry or Purſuit after her, as his Couſin had informed him of her generous and noble Procedure, and he was willing to ſecond ſuch exalted Views: As to the Roads, they were ſafe enough at that Time of Night, and he'd venture his Life that he brought her to his Houſe, riding at an eaſy Rate, in much leſs than two Hours: That he had a good Pillion; and, though ſhe might not have been uſed to ride double, ſhe would find it perfectly eaſy, nay, eaſier than the Side-Saddle by far; and his Horſe was ſo ſtrong and ſure-footed, as to enſure her Safety. He then, ſeeing her inclined to go that Night, ſlily aſked her if ſhe knew how far *Deptford* was from *London*; if ſhe was acquainted with any body there, and if ſhe knew the Road they were to go by to that Village; and, being anſwered in the Negative to all theſe Queſtions, he hugged himſelf at the Security with which he ſhould execute his deſigned Villainy. He afterwards went out to give Orders to have his Horſe got ready, whilſt poor *Maria* diſcharged the young Woman who had conducted her to the Inn, with a ſmall Preſent,

ſent, and the ſincereſt Compliments to the accurſed *Price*, for the many Services ſhe had performed for her.

Maria was ſomewhat ſurpriſed, as ſhe was mounting behind her Farmer, to ſee a Chariot and Six paſs by her through the Inn-Yard, the Driver of which whiſpered to him; and ſhe thought ſhe diſtinguiſhed the Words *Lord Beaumont*, and was ready to faint with Apprehenſion; but as it was not his Livery or Equipage, ſhe ſoon calmed herſelf, on the Suppoſition that her Ears had deceived her. Inſtead of taking the Way to *Deptford*, her Guardian put on, upon a round Trot, towards *Hyde-Park* Corner; and when he had got over the Stones, aſking her kindly if ſhe rode with Eaſe, and could bear Galloping, and being anſwered in the Affirmative, he ſet out as fleetly as the Horſe could carry them, till he came into *Kenſington*; but her Afflictions ſo uſurped her Thoughts, that ſhe took no Manner of Notice as ſhe paſſed through the Town, though a Place ſhe was not unacquainted with; and as it was alſo very dark, ſhe imagined ſhe was ſtill in ſome Part of *London*. Her Conductor ſoon ſtruck down a Road which carried them towards *Acton*; and they were, in a ſmall Time afterwards, buried in the Silence of an unfrequented Way, where for an Hour ſhe could neither hear Carriage or Horſeman paſſing them: Mean-time her Companion ſaid very little, and ſhe herſelf was too much abſorbed in Thought,

Thought, to break that Silence which was not diſagreeable to her muſing, melancholy State of Mind. But, all on a ſudden, the Rattling of a Carriage was heard, and a Voice which halloo'd out, "Who's there?" To which her Conductor returned, "Is it you, *John?*" and, being anſwered in the Affirmative, ſtopped ſhort, and bid his Charge not be frightened, for it was an old Friend of his, who would give her a Caſt in his Maſter's Chariot, which went cloſe by his Houſe, and from which they were about two Miles diſtant. She now began to reflect on the Time they had paſſed ſince their firſt Setting-out; was ſurpriſed at the Length of the Way; from Surpriſe fell into a Tremor, which ſhook her tender Frame with great Violence; and ſhe even foreboded ſome intended Miſchief. She, when too late, began to ſuſpect Danger to her Perſon, and faintly cried, "Good God! where am "I? Sure, Sir, you mean me no Injury!" "No, Madam," her Companion returned, "fear nothing; you are in the Hands of thoſe "that reſpect you, and you will perform the "reſt of the Journey with more Eaſe than "you have yet experienced." So ſaying, he lifted her off the Horſe, and ſhe was reluctantly placed in the Chariot, about which ſhe heard ſeveral Voices whiſpering, but could not diſtinguiſh the Perſons from whence thoſe Whiſpers proceeded. When ſhe was ſeated, ſtill trembling and ready to ſwoon, ſhe perceived a Male Companion had

had placed himſelf by her, who pulled up the Windows, and then the Chariot drove away with amazing Celerity. Her Terror, by this time, had ſo overcome her, that ſhe was incapable of enquiring if it was the Farmer that accompanied her in the Vehicle, and was near fainting with Dread and Apprehenſion, and, in this ſilent and forlorn Condition, continued for near an Hour, when the Chariot ſtopped; her Companion opened the Door, jumped out, and, giving her his Hand, ſhe had juſt Strength enough left to follow him towards a Light at a conſiderable Diſtance, which was held by a Female, and diſcovered to her a large Houſe, which ſhe imagined was the Farmer's, but, as ſhe approached nearer, perceived that it was not the Farmer himſelf who led her by the Hand, but another Perſon, ſo muffled up in a Great Coat, as to prevent her having the leaſt View of his Face. The Woman, whoſe Countenance was not diſpleaſing, received her with great Courteſy, and conducted her into a ſmall, but neat, Parlour, which had the Look of ſuch a Room in a Farm-Houſe, and helped ſtill to deceive her. A large Wood Fire had been lighted up, and ſhe was ſeated before it, whilſt her Hoſteſs brought in Wine, and ſome Proviſions, and urged her to refreſh herſelf, telling her, ſhe was ſure ſhe muſt be greatly fatigued with her Journey; that ſhe was pleaſed to ſee her, and begged ſhe would be free, and look upon every thing

in

in that Houſe as her own. Somewhat encouraged by this Civility, ſhe ventured to aſk her if ſhe was Mrs. *Price*'s Relation, and whether her Huſband was not yet arrived: "Yes, Madam, I am the Perſon, at your "Service, ſhe replied; but my Huſband is "not yet returned, and perhaps may not "till Morning, as I know he had two or "three Places to call at, at one of which "probably he may be detained all Night." All this appeared ſo open and probable, that *Maria* yielded to her Perſuaſions, took ſome Refreſhment, and her Spirits began to revive, eſpecially as the ſuppoſed Farmer's Wife behaved with much Friendſhip and Cordiality; and, ſome time after Supper, carrying her up to a decent Chamber, and telling her the Bed and Sheets were well aired, left her, after many kind Wiſhes, to that Repoſe which indeed ſhe ſtood in great Need of.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Character of the Earl of Beaumont *and his Sons.---Story of Mr.* Welldone *and his Lady.---An uncommon Event.*

MR. *Worthy* and his amiable Daughter, whilſt poor *Maria* was effecting her generous Purpoſe, were as happy as Mr. and Mrs. *Welldone*'s Endeavours to pleaſe and oblige could make them. After Dinner, Mr. *Worthy* entertained them with the Adventure he met with in going home from his laſt Viſit to Mr. *Welldone*'s, and *Henrietta* deſcribed *Maria* and her Perfections ſo advantageouſly, that they expreſſed a longing Deſire to ſee her. The Demand of the Earl of *Beaumont*, and his rude Behaviour, were not forgotten, which kindled Mr. *Welldone* into ſome Warmth, and he aſſured his Friend Mr. *Worthy*, that his Aſſiſtance ſhould not be wanting, if neceſſary, to the better Defence of the lovely *Maria*. He recollected that Lord *Beaumont* ſometimes was met with a young Lady, of exceeding great Beauty, with him in his Chariot, and to hear it whiſpered that ſhe was a natural Daughter. They had heard indeed nothing of her being turned out of Doors; but both he and his Lady, who had formerly had ſome Acquaintance with the Family, juſtified Mr. *Worthy*'s bad Opinion of them; aſſuring

aſſuring him, that the old Nobleman was looked upon to be a Man of no Principle, and whoſe ill Uſage ſhortened the Life of his Counteſs, a very excellent Lady; that the young Lord, Viſcount *Belvidere*, was an abandoned Rake and Debauchee, who had early forfeited his Character in Life, by a thouſand Acts of Injuſtice and Extravagance; but that the ſecond and youngeſt Son, Colonel *Beaumont*, was a young Man of much Honour and ſtrict Sobriety, and quite the Reverſe, in every thing, of his Father and Brother. They all agreed that Miſs *Maria* muſt have been ill uſed, and that a Girl of her amiable Temper could never give juſt Cauſe of Offence. This Diſcourſe was followed by many Reflections upon the Conduct of Parents to their Children, and the Behaviour of Children to their Parents; upon the miſerable Fate of Children, eſpecially Females, who are early robbed of their Parents, and the Tenderneſs due to ſuch unfortunate Perſons. Mrs. *Welldone*, the Softneſs of whoſe Diſpoſition was touched with the Subject, ſhewed ſo much Senſibility, as even to ſhed Tears; upon which her Huſband endeavoured to turn the Diſcourſe to a more chearful Subject, and, with a moſt endearing Action, preſſed her to his Boſom, and wiped the Tears from her Eyes, ſaying, "My "*Fanny* is of ſo compaſſionate a Temper, "that any Tale of Calamity in which "others are involved, makes as much Im-

"preſſion

" preſſion upon her Spirits, as if ſhe herſelf " were the ſuffering Party." " Alas! my " Dear," ſhe returned, " the Story of this " young Lady has, I don't know by what " Kind of Magic, recalled my ſweet *Fanny* " to my Mind, if I may ſay recall her, " when I dwell every Hour upon the mourn- " ful Idea: Who can ſay that ſhe is not " ſtruggling with Diſtreſs, Pain, and An- " guiſh, whilſt her Parents enjoy every " Convenience of Life, and would be " tranſported to impart them to the dear " Creature, and to protect her from every " Misfortune?" Here her Tears redoubled, and Miſs *Henrietta* could not refrain from bearing her Company, though ſhe had not the leaſt Conception of her Meaning. Mr. *Welldone* hung down his Head, with an Action of much Concern and Trouble, till Mr. *Worthy* ſaid, " Dear *Welldone*, I de- " ſire to know what your Lady hints at. " I remember your Marriage; but I re- " collect no Children you ever had, but " *Georgy*, now at *Cambridge*, and Miſs *Sophia*, " who ſeem to anſwer all your Cares and " Expectations. That young Lady, now at " her Aunt's at *Batterſea*, as you inform " me, is the very Picture of her Mamma; " and my *Henrietta* ſays, for Quickneſs of " Underſtanding, and Delicacy of Senti- " ment, ſhe is a perfect Miracle." " My " Friend," returned Mr. *Welldone*, " I am " perfectly happy in my Lady and Children; " but, alas! there is a corroding Remem-

" brance

" brance at my Heart, which, though I " ſtrive ever ſo much to overcome it, will " be predominant: Mrs. *Welldone* feels it " ſtill more ſenſibly than myſelf, and I do " not perceive that Time leſſens either of " our Affliction. As we are now toge- " ther, if Mrs. *Welldone* will permit me, " I will inform you of the Cauſe of the " only Unhappineſs Providence ever viſited " us with, amidſt our Affluence and Pro- " ſperity, for which we are truly thankful " to his holy Name." Mrs. *Welldone* ſignifying her Aſſent, he thus continued: " I need " not inform you, my dear *Worthy*, as you " well remember him, that my Father had " in his Temper all the Ruggedneſs of the " Profeſſion in which he was bred, and " in which he made a Progreſs, that will " always redound to the Honour of his " Name and Family. When he returned " from his laſt Expedition, and was pro- " moted to the Rank of Vice-Admiral, " he conceived a Deſign of obtaining for " me, as a Wife, the eldeſt Daughter of " the then firſt Commiſſioner of the Admi- " ralty, who, no doubt, would bring an " immenſe Fortune into his Family, but " was neither in Perſon or Temper a very " eligible Match. My Mother had been " dead about two Years; otherwiſe, from " her Indulgence to me, and her Power " over my Father, I might have been ex- " cuſed from complying with his Deſires. " But he now made very little Ceremony,

" demanded

" demanded Permiſſion for me to wait upon
" her, before he even ſignified ſuch Deſire
" to me, and then peremptorily commanded
" me to comply with his Injunctions, in
" preparing to addreſs and marry the Lady
" forthwith, or threatened to marry again
" himſelf, and give to any Children he
" might have by ſuch Match, all that
" immenſe Fortune he had acquired in
" his many ſucceſsful Cruizes, and which
" was abſolutely in his own Diſpoſal, tho'
" he could not deprive me of his paternal
" Eſtate. You know, my Education and
" Manner of thinking muſt make the
" Thought of a diſagreeable Match very
" irkſome to me; but I had a far more
" powerful Motive to deter me. I was
" deeply enamoured of this dear Crea-
" ture; and, though her Fortune was not
" equal to what my Father might ex-
" pect, yet I, who was convinced that a
" Harmony of Mind and Sentiment was
" the only Concomitant that could render
" a married Couple happy, and who found
" every thing in my *Fanny*, that could
" ſecure us a laſting Felicity; who had
" gained her Affections, and ſincerely given
" her the ſole Poſſeſſion of my Heart,
" could not think of proving falſe to ſo
" much Goodneſs: Sooner would I have
" ſubmitted to be ſtripped of even the
" common Needs of Life, than have been
" ſo baſe and cruel. After the moſt ſolemn
" Vows had paſſed, that ever bound a

" Pair

" Pair of Lovers, ſhe had accompanied
" her Father to an Eſtate he had in *Ire-*
" *land*; for, as ſhe was his only Child,
" he always carried her with him where-
" ever he went; and, at the Time of
" this Propoſal, ſhe had been from *Eng-*
" *land* near ſix Months, an Abſence in-
" ſupportable, had not the ſweet Inter-
" courſe of Letters ſomewhat alleviated our
" mutual Chagrin.

" I did not expreſs to my Father any
" Repugnance to his Commands, but de-
" ſired a Week's Time to prepare myſelf
" for the propoſed Viſit, during which I
" wrote an Account to *Fanny* of the whole
" Affair, promiſing ſolemnly to renounce
" every Advantage rather than ſuffer the leaſt
" Violation of the tender Affection we bore
" to each other. Her Anſwer, however,
" was full of Doubt and Deſpair, which
" affected me greatly; and, as my Father
" had not the leaſt Suſpicion of my Con-
" nection with her Family, I was reſolved
" to give her the moſt convincing Proof,
" (could I gain her Conſent) that I would be
" her's alone, by an immediate Union with
" her Virtues. For this Purpoſe I revol-
" ved a thouſand Schemes to facilitate a
" Journey to *Ireland*; but before any of
" them were ripe for Execution, the Week's
" Indulgence was paſt, and I was com-
" pelled to wait upon my deſtined Bride.
" I found it neceſſary to diſſemble, and,
" though I forbore any Expreſſions to her

" that

" that might be taken as a Declaration
" of Love, yet I behaved with ſo much
" Complaiſance, as to pleaſe all Parties;
" and the old Gentlemen, thinking them-
" ſelves ſecure from Oppoſition, were in
" no immediate Hurry to conclude the
" Match. At my Wits End, however,
" Providence, in about three Weeks, af-
" forded me the Opportunity I longed for,
" without diſobeying or flying from my
" Father. His Brother, who had a great
" Eſtate in *Ireland*, where he conſtantly re-
" ſided, died ſuddenly of a Fit of Apo-
" plexy: It was neceſſary my Father or
" myſelf ſhould repair immediately to that
" Kingdom, to take Care of, and ſettle
" Concerns of ſo great Importance, and
" which made ſo conſiderable an Addition
" to our Fortune. He himſelf was laid up
" with the Gout, and luckily determined
" that I ſhould go over in his Room.
" After taking Leave of my deſigned Spouſe,
" (whom I had ſeen more than enough
" to juſtify my Averſion) and her Father,
" I ſet out, and in about ten Days arri-
" ved, without any Accident, at *Dublin*.
" When I had applied to, and employed,
" proper Agents in relation to my Uncle's
" Affairs, and put Matters into a proper
" Train for Execution, which took up a
" few Days, and which ſeemed as tedious as
" ſo many Months, I ſet out for *Corke*,
" where my dear *Fanny*, whom I had by Let-
" ter acquainted with this fortunate Event,

" then

" then reſided with her Father, at the
" Houſe of a near Relation. Our Meeting,
" you may well believe, was with mutual
" Warmth and Tenderneſs; and perhaps
" we felt as much Satisfaction as ever any
" Lovers did, whoſe Paſſions are recorded in
" Romance. The Father, who had a great
" Eſteem for me, received me with much
" Joy, and we ſpent our Time agreeably
" for ſome Days, before we put our Pro-
" ject in Execution. We were both ſen-
" ſible that her Father muſt be deceived,
" as he was a Man of too ſcrupulous and
" nice a Senſe of Honour, to conſent to a
" private Marriage. I will be ſhort: We
" made the Gentleman and his Lady, at
" whoſe Houſe we were, acquainted with
" our Caſe, and procured their Aſſiſtance:
" We were married in the moſt obſcure
" Village in the Neighbourhood of *Corke*,
" by a Clergyman related to the Family;
" and I became poſſeſſed of the Treaſure
" which my Soul ſo ardently longed for.
" Nor did my Departure for *Dublin*, which
" happened in about a Month after, deprive
" me of the Felicity I enjoyed; I had Intereſt
" enough to perſuade my *Fanny*'s Father to
" accompany me, and carry his Daugh-
" ter with him; and in that City I pro-
" cured all the Pleaſures I could deviſe for
" her Entertainment. But we were obli-
" ged, in about a Fortnight, to ſeparate.
" A Letter from my Father, who was ex-
" tremely ill with the Gout in his Stomach,

" and ordered me immediately to embark
" for *England*, brought on the Hour of part-
" ing, which was with the utmoſt Regret
" on both Sides: Our Sighs and Tears
" were Witneſſes of our reluctant Adieu.

" When I arrived in *London*, I found my
" poor Father given over by his Phyſicians,
" and ſpeechleſs, and, to my inexpreſſible
" Concern, two Days after, he departed this
" Life, at a Time, alas! when too many
" worldly Schemes had engroſſed his Atten-
" tion. But Heaven is all Mercy, and I
" venture to pronounce him happy. When
" Decency would permit, I waited upon
" my deſigned Bride and her Father, came
" handſomely off of that Buſineſs, and the
" Lady was ſoon after thoroughly conſoled
" for my Loſs, by marrying a Title and a
" Coronet. However expeditious I might
" be, it was ſeveral Months before I could
" ſet out again for the Kingdom where the
" Delight of my Life was reſident, and in
" which her Father, who ſhe informed me
" was fallen into a declining State of Health,
" was reſolved to continue for the Remain-
" der of his Days. I underſtood from her
" dear Letters, that my Preſence was be-
" come abſolutely neceſſary, as ſhe began
" to appear differently in her Perſon from
" the Slimneſs of her Virgin-State, which,
" if poſſible, redoubled my Fondneſs for her.
" At length I ſet out with a grand Retinue,
" and arrived at *Corke* in about three Weeks,
" where I was received with every Demon-
" ſtration

" ſtration of Joy. My dear *Fanny* was in
" Mourning, as was alſo her Father and the
" whole Family, in compliment to me:
" And now, reſolved to make our Marriage
" publick, I employed the aforeſaid Cler-
" gyman to break the Matter to *Fanny*'s
" Father. Without much Difficulty we
" obtained his Pardon, and about ten Weeks
" afterwards I was made the happy Father
" of a lovely Child, whom we baptized by
" the Name of *Frances*, after her Mother.
" But our Joy was ſoon ſucceeded by ex-
" ceſſive Grief: My Wife's Father died in
" our Arms, with that Conſciouſneſs of
" having lived a Life of Virtue and Piety,
" which alone can ſmooth the gloomy Path
" into the other World. *Ireland* ſoon grew
" diſagreeable to us; and having ſettled our
" ſeveral Eſtates under proper Management,
" we embarked at *Dublin* for our native
" Plains, with our dear little Daughter and
" our Servants of both Sexes, accompa-
" nied by our Relations at *Corke*, who were
" reſolved to ſpend ſome Time with us in
" *England*. Alas! before we had been ma-
" ny Hours on our Paſſage to *Holyhead*, a
" dreadful Tempeſt aroſe, and raged with
" ſuch Impetuoſity, that the Seamen gave
" all over for loſt. I will not go about to
" deſcribe the Situation of my Mind upon
" this Occaſion, having before my Eyes all
" that was dear to me in the World, and
" upon the Point of loſing them for ever,
" and of being bereft of Life, juſt at the

" Time when I was going to enjoy all its " Bleſſings. But Heaven, more gracious " than ſuch a Murmurer deſerved, had not " decreed our Deſtruction. Whilſt my *Fanny* held her dear Babe claſped in her Arms, " and I as cloſely preſſed them both to my " Boſom, our Seamen cried out *Land! Land!*—As we had for two Days and " two ſucceſſive Nights been driven far to " the Northward, it was imagined to be " the Coaſt of *Scotland*, as indeed it proved " to be: But the Storm continued ſo violent, that our very Hopes were the " Grounds of Horror and Fear, as we every " Hour expected to be driven on Shore, and " to periſh on the Spot where we wiſhed " to find Security. Night too came on " apace, which was as gloomy as can well " be imagined, and, it may be ſuppoſed, " was paſſed moſt uncomfortably. About " Four next Morning, maugre all the Skill " of the Maſter and Mariners, we ran on a " Sand at the Entrance, as it afterwards appeared, of *Glenlure Bay*, on the Coaſt of " *Galloway*. The Veſſel thumped moſt terribly, but did not, Thanks to Providence, " go to Pieces; and in a few Hours, with " the Aſſiſtance of the honeſt Country-People, who came out to ſuccour us " in their Cobles, we were ſafely brought " to Anchor in the Bay. After returning " ſincere Thanks to the Father of Mercies, " I reſolved not to truſt again all that my " Soul held dear to this uncertain Element:

" And

" And though the Journey by Land would
" be very fatiguing, yet every Step preſent-
" ing new Objects, and as we could make
" as ſhort Stages as we thought proper, we
" undertook it, only taking with us two
" Male and one Female Servant; and giving
" Orders to the reſt how to proceed when
" the Packet arrived at *Holyhead*, both with
" reſpect to themſelves and our Baggage,
" we began our Journey from the little
" Town of *Stranraver* towards *Edinburgh*,
" meeting therein with the utmoſt Civility
" from the Nobility and Gentry in our
" Way, and arrived in that ancient City,
" not a little delighted with our Tour.
" Here our little *Fanny* unfortunately fell ill
" of the Small-Pox, which detained us for
" a conſiderable Time. During her Ill-
" neſs, the Gentlewoman at whoſe Houſe
" we lodged ſhewed ſo much Tenderneſs to
" the Child, and was ſo ſkilful a Nurſe to
" her, that we thought we could never
" enough acknowledge her Friendſhip and
" Kindneſs. Her Name was *Blair*, the
" Widow of a Writer to the Signet, who
" had a handſome Annuity for her Life.
" Over-perſuaded by this Gentlewoman,
" who was to come to *London* at the Begin-
" ning of next Year, and promiſed to bring
" *Fanny* with her; moved by her Tears,
" when ſhe heard we were reſuming our
" Journey, and from the Conſideration of
" the great Fatigue it would be to ſuch an
" Infant, we, though with Reluctance,

" conſented to leave her in her Hands, at
" which ſhe (the little dear Creature being
" extremely fond of her) was perfectly tranſ-
" ported. We left her a conſiderable Sum
" of Money to defray any Charges that
" might become neceſſary; and I beſought
" a Friend, who was a Commiſſioner of the
" Cuſtoms in *Scotland*, to overſee the Ma-
" nagement of her as often as Opportunity
" ſuffered him to call at Mrs. *Blair*'s. Thus
" perfectly eaſy, and perſuaded we had act-
" ed with great Prudence, we ſet out upon
" our Journey for *London*, arrived happily
" at my Houſe here, and found our Servants
" and Baggage had all ſafely arrived ſome
" Weeks before us. We wrote almoſt eve-
" ry Poſt to Mrs. *Blair*, from whom we
" had the moſt delightful Accounts for ſome
" Months of our Daughter's Improvement
" in Health and Strength, which were con-
" firmed by my Friend the Commiſſioner.
" Mrs. *Welldone* lay-in of her ſecond Child
" during this Period, and pleaſed herſelf
" with the Idea of having little *Fanny* up
" ſoon to ſhare her Tenderneſs: But how
" were we ſurpriſed and aſtoniſhed to re-
" ceive a Letter from Mrs. *Blair*, inform-
" ing us ſhe could not come to *London* till
" the Month of *Auguſt*, as ſhe was obliged
" to go, upon ſome particular Buſineſs, to
" meet a Relation at *Paris*, to which Place
" ſhe intended to carry her Darling *Fanny*
" with her, and was to ſet out before ſhe
" could receive an Anſwer to her Letter!

" I dared

" I dared not, for ſome time, impart this
" News to Mrs. *Welldone*, and indeed be-
" gan to fear for my Child myſelf; but for-
" bore to indulge many Suſpicions that aroſe
" in my Mind about Mrs. *Blair*, till I had
" wrote to my Friend. His anſwer con-
" firmed but too well all that I dreaded:
" He informed me, that calling at her Houſe
" after a three Weeks Retreat in the Coun-
" try, he found ſhe had embarked with her
" Servants and little Miſs *Fanny* for *Bou-*
" *logne*; that he now underſtood ſhe was a
" bigoted Roman-Catholic; and from the
" fancied Merit of ſaving a Soul, and her
" Affection for my Daughter, he ſhould be
" ſurpriſed if ever I ſaw her again. He
" added all, for my Conſolation, that a Per-
" ſon unaffected as a Parent could ſay to
" calm my Affliction, and promiſed to write
" to a Friend at *Boulogne*, and another at
" *Paris*, and direct him to watch for the
" Arrival of ſuch Perſons in that Town and
" the Capital, hoping, however improba-
" ble, ſuch an Incident might happen. Oh!
" my Friend *Worthy*, a thouſand times I
" curſed my Blindneſs, and the Eaſineſs of
" my Temper, in thus, from a falſe Ten-
" derneſs, conſigning my Infant to the Care
" of Strangers, and not only in this World
" to loſe her, but, by her being educated
" in a falſe and bloody Religion, to hazard
" her eternal Happineſs! But Mrs. *Well-*
" *done*'s Condition obliged me to ſmother
" my Regrets in her Preſence. Mean time

" I wrote to all my Acquaintance in *France*,
" and procured my Friends in *England* to
" write to theirs, deſcribing Mrs. *Blair* and
" the Child, and offering a Reward of two
" thouſand Pounds for any one that brought
" me Intelligence where they were conceal-
" ed. I ſent over ſeveral Perſons upon the
" ſame Buſineſs to every Part of that King-
" dom, but all to little Purpoſe: We could
" never hear from that Time to this what
" became of her and her Nurſe. But reli-
" gious Seminaries are inveloped with ſuch
" obſcure Secrecy, that I ſtill imagine her
" in ſome Nunnery, either in *France*, *Spain*,
" or *Portugal*, where ſhe will never hear of
" her unfortunate Parents, or partake of
" that Fortune which is her Right; but be
" taught, unknowingly, to curſe them in the
" groſs with thoſe their Faith teaches them
" to call Heretics. You may well ima-
" gine what Pangs Mrs. *Welldone* felt when
" the horrid Tale was firſt opened to her.
" Diſtraction for ſome time uſurped the
" Place of Reaſon; a ſevere Illneſs, from
" the Dejection of her Spirits, and conſtant
" brooding over her Loſs, ſucceeded; and I
" was near loſing my deareſt Wife, as well
" as my Daughter. Though Time has
" ſomewhat increaſed our Reſignation to the
" Divine Diſpoſal of Events, yet the twen-
" ty Years and more that are elapſed ſince
" this fatal Loſs cannot obliterate it from
" our Memories. Not a Day paſſes but it

" draws

" draws Sighs from the Bottom of our " Hearts, and poiſons all the Enjoyments " of Life."

Here Mr. *Welldone* ceaſed his brief Relation, and the Hearers ſincerely ſympathiſed in the Sorrows of this amiable Couple. They parted not till it was late, which they did with that mutual Regret which good Perſons feel when they are ſeparated from each other.

CHAP. VIII.

Condition of Mr. Worthy's *Family after the Flight of* Maria.---*An intereſting Diſcovery, and its ſalutary Conſequences.*

SOON after *Maria* had departed from Mr. *Worthy*'s Door, and was out of Sight, the politic *Sally Price* ran with great Speed, and ſeemingly breathleſs and frightened to Death, into Mrs. *Worthy*'s Chamber, crying out, " Oh! dear Madam, the young " Lady—Oh!—ſhe—ſhe—the young La- " dy—cannot be found. I ſtepped down " Stairs only for about Half a Quarter of " an Hour, and when I returned found ſhe " was not in the Chamber.—I ſearched the " whole Houſe over, but cannot find her; " but here are two Letters directed to you,

"Madam, and my young Lady;—perhaps "they may explain the Myſtery." Mrs. *Worthy*, with a trembling Hand, took the Letters, and breaking open that directed to herſelf, read its Contents with the utmoſt Surpriſe and Grief. All her Regard for the amiable *Maria* returned. Weak as ſhe was, ſhe ordered the Servants then in the Houſe to be called before her, but could diſcover nothing that gave the leaſt Reaſon to imagine any of them had been privy to her Flight. She wept; ſhe accuſed herſelf of Cruelty and Injuſtice; ſhe ſcolded *Sally Price*, who now, raiſing her Voice a Note higher, as her Rival, ſhe was ſure, was far enough out of the Way, anſwered her with ſome Degree of Saucineſs, which not a little ſurpriſed and diſconcerted her Lady. Her Self-Reproaches became very ſevere: She reflected over all that had paſſed in regard to *Maria*, and in the then Situation of her Mind accuſed herſelf with being the Cauſe of her Abſence; could recollect nothing in *Maria*'s Conduct, or that of Mr. *Worthy* towards the young Lady, that could give her the leaſt Offence; and even ſuſpected *Sally* to be privy to her Elopement. That Suſpicion brought a Number of ſucceſſive ones after them: She remembered the many Stories that Wench had brought her; that ſhe had been the Cauſe of her late Coldneſs to *Maria*; and her Mind was already prepared to receive any Conviction of her Diſ-

honeſty

honeſty that could be conveyed to her. She angrily ordered her out of her Sight, and to let her know when her Maſter and *Henrietta* returned, till which Time ſhe was reſolved not to go to Reſt. She ſpent the Hours that intervened in ſo many bitter and mortifying Self-Reproofs, as almoſt reduced her to a State of Lunacy. She admired the Generoſity of *Maria*, which, ſet in Oppoſition to her own Behaviour, gave her the utmoſt Pain, and filled her with Confuſion. She even dreaded the Return of Mr. *Worthy* and her Daughter, and, for the firſt Time, began to think herſelf culpable in admitting idle Suſpicions to operate on her Mind, to the Prejudice of Perſons ſo dear to her.

When ſhe was informed the Coach had ſtopped at the Door, ſhe left her Apartment, and, with more Strength than ſhe ſeemed Miſtreſs of, went down Stairs to meet Mr. *Worthy* and *Henrietta*. They at once foreboded ſomewhat extraordinary muſt have happened by this unuſual Appearance; but no Words can expreſs their Grief and Aſtoniſhment when Mrs. *Worthy* acquainted them of the Reaſon for her ſitting up, and ſhewed them her Letter, and that to her Daughter. They even wept over theſe Teſtimonies of *Maria*'s Goodneſs of Heart and Generoſity, and it was a conſiderable Space before they were compoſed enough to enter upon the Manner of her Eſcape, the Motives to it

had

had taken up their Thoughts ſo entirely. "Alas! my Dear," ſaid Mr. *Worthy*, "you "ſee for once to what Troubles your Suſ- "picions of my Conduct have expoſed us. "For God's ſake, endeavour to conquer "ſuch a Turn of Mind, and do me the "Juſtice to think no Woman ever ſhared "with you any Part of my Notice. If the "many Years of our Union; if the Pledges "of our mutual Affection, who have a "Right to all our Solicitudes; if my con- "ſtant Behaviour, my unfeigned Tender- "neſs, my known Principles, will not ſe- "cure you from ſuch idle Whims, (excuſe "me for calling them ſo) yet let a Regard "for your own Health, Peace, and Hap- "pineſs, have its proper Weight with you. "I was aware that you would entertain "your old Surmiſes, which was the Mo- "tive of my carrying the young Lady to "Mrs. *Couſens*'s; and, believe me, on that "Account I have avoided ſeeing or ſpeaking "to her ſince. You ſee her generous Soul "diſdained the Receipt of Obligations where "ſhe was ſuſpected, though ſhe beſtowed "upon you and our *Henrietta* all her Af- "fection. Perhaps this lovely Creature is "now wandering in the utmoſt Diſtreſs of "Body and Mind,—nay, which I rather "apprehend, has again thrown herſelf into "the Arms of thoſe Wretches from whom "ſhe had ſo lately been delivered; and we "have loſt the delightful Opportunity of "protecting Virtue from Defilement, and

"Worth

"Worth from Neceſſity: Yet how ſhe "ſhould be able to execute her cruel Reſo- "lution of leaving us, without ſome Coun- "ſel and Aſſiſtance, I own appears to me "to be very myſterious. But let us have "all the Servants up before us that were in "the Houſe; let us examine them, and "endeavour to form ſome Judgment of the "Route ſhe has taken;—and yet ſhe con- "verſed with none of them but your own "Woman, whom I muſt not ſuſpect; tho' "often the firſt Diſcoverer of a Tranſaction "proves to have the deepeſt Concern in it. "She hardly knew the Avenues to the "Houſe, was never from your's and *Hen-* "*rietta*'s Apartments, and, as my Daugh- "ter has informed me, had no Communi- "cation with any one in the Family but "yourſelves and *Price*."

This concluding Remark had all its due Force upon Mrs. *Worthy*; alternately her Colour flushed and forſook her Cheeks; ſhe inly revolved every Paſſage between herſelf and her Familiar, the Intelligence ſhe had from time to time brought her, the Inſinuations againſt her Maſter and *Maria*, and even againſt her Daughter. An honeſt, ingenuous Shame, bordering upon real Conviction, began to poſſeſs her. In a Moment ſhe reflected over the whole of Mr. *Worthy*'s tender Carriage towards her, her own unreaſonable Conduct, and painted to herſelf, in the ſtrongeſt Colours, the Diſturbance ſhe muſt have given for ſo many Years

to

to her Family, and the Contempt which ſhould naturally fall upon her Abſurdities. In ſhort, ſhe was already prepared to baniſh all her wonted Fears and Suſpicions, and to recall Harmony and Peace, thoſe endearing, inſpiring Gueſts, to her Boſom. During this little Interval, *Henrietta* had been up into her Apartment to take a melancholy Survey of the Place in which ſhe had enjoyed ſo much Felicity in the Converſe of her dear, now dearer than ever, *Maria*, and where ſhe had unknowingly received her laſt Adieu. Again and again ſhe read over that lovely Maid's Letter, every Line of which ſhe wetted with her Tears. From thence ſhe was led directly to ſhudder at the Diſtreſs to which ſhe had expoſed herſelf; and for a Moment revolved, even with ſome Anger againſt her, the ſad Conſequence of her Mamma's Caprice.

She returned into the Dining-Room Time enough, however, to hear, with Pleaſure and Amazement, her Mamma's Reply to her Father. "Mr. *Worthy*," ſaid the amiable Lady, a Bluſh of Shame ſuffuſing her whole Face, "I am in ſuch Confuſion, I "am almoſt incapable of making a proper "Anſwer to what you have ſaid. Alas! I "begin to fear I have really impoſed upon "myſelf, and ſuffered my Credulity to be "impoſed upon in relation to the young "Lady, whoſe Loſs I really deplore!— "Perhaps I have been long to blame for "my injurious Suſpicions of the beſt of

"Men

" Men and Huſbands!"—Here ſhe pauſed: Her Voice was interrupted by Sighs; ſtruggling Paſſions diſtended her Breaſt; and ſhe would have ſwooned, had not a copious Shower of Tears relieved her.—Her aſtoniſhed Huſband, riſing haſtily from his Seat, claſped her in his Arms, exclaiming, " Gra-
" cious Heaven! what joyful, what tranſ-
" porting Sounds are theſe! Does my dear-
" eſt, beſt Creature—will ſhe at laſt do me
" the Juſtice I deſerve! will ſhe bleſs me
" with her Preſence and her Smiles!—
" Shall we renew thoſe joyous, thoſe ec-
" ſtatic Moments, when all was Peace, Har-
" mony and Love!—Mention, my Dear-
" eſt, that dark Period no more:—I baniſh
" the Remembrance—I forget the very Idea
" of it for ever!—Reſtored to me thus,
" what can be wanting to the Felicity of
" your too happy *Worthy!*"—The recovered Wife returned his Embrace, and gently puſhing him from her, continued thus:
" From this Moment I am reſolved no more
" to indulge ſuch fantaſtic Imaginations:—
" I awake as it were from a Dream of Hor-
" ror, wherein I have been about to be pre-
" cipitated from a dreadful Precipice into a
" yawning Gulph, all dreary and horrible;
" and level Plains and flowery Meads ſuc-
" ceed the dark Deluſion!—Happy that my
" Follies meet with ſuch Compaſſion and
" Indulgence from the Perſon I have moſt
" wronged, but whoſe exalted Goodneſs
" and Knowledge of the Sources of my Frail-

" ty

" ty incline him to make ſuch generous Al-
" lowances for me.—But let me treſpaſs no
" further in relation to myſelf;—future
" Hours of Reaſon, I hope, will atone for
" me, with every Endeavour to wipe out
" the Remembrance of my Weakneſs.—
" I really ſuſpect *Sally Price* (for what Views
" I know not, nor can gueſs) to be privy
" to *Maria*'s Elopement.—Surely ſhe could
" not artfully induce her to it!—Alas! Mr.
" *Worthy! Henrietta!* my Follies appear
" truly odious to me.—I own, that Girl,
" encouraged by the Eagerneſs with which
" I ſwallowed the Poiſon, often gave me
" ſuch Hints of *Maria*'s Regard to you,
" Sir, as at length—fatal Deluſion!—
" made me quite cold to her.—Alas! might
" not the artful Creature, on the other
" hand, make me as dreaded an Object to
" *Maria* as ſhe made *Maria* to me?—I
" ſhudder at the Thought—and yet—I
" cannot help thinking, for more Reaſons
" than one that now occur, and which I
" beſeech you to ſpare me the Confuſion of
" enumerating, that *Sally Price* is treache-
" rous and deſigning: Therefore, before
" we go to Reſt, let us make once more the
" Enquiry you mention, and try if by any
" Means we can recover the dear, generous
" Creature, whoſe Loſs we ſo deplore, and
" who is intitled to every Amends I can
" make her in the future Courſe of my
" Life."—Never were two People ſo en-
raptured, to hear her talk ſo ſenſibly.—*Hen-*

rietta, for a Moment, forgot her *Maria*, and with fond Addreſs hung round her Mamma's Neck, and hailed the Hour that had made them all ſo happy, ſaying, "This is "a bleſſed Fore-runner of the Return of "our *Maria*.—I am convinced Heaven "will hear our Petitions, and that our En- "deavours to recover the amiable Girl will "be crowned with Succeſs." Her Mamma kiſſed her tenderly for the ſweet Hope her Words endeavoured to inſpire: And now the Servants were again examined; but nothing could be diſcovered, ſave the ſincereſt Marks of Sorrow for the Occaſion of the Queſtions put to them, as, ſince the Viſit of Lord *Beaumont*, they had all intereſted themſelves in *Maria*'s Safety. Laſt of all *Sally Price* was ſent for before them; but ſhe anſwered every Queſtion with ſuch ſeeming Openneſs, profeſſed ſo much Regret at what had happened, and teſtified ſuch an Affection and Regard for *Maria*, that ſhe removed all Suſpicions of her from the Minds of her Maſter and her young Lady: And though Mrs. *Worthy*, particularly from the excellent Character ſhe gave of *Maria*, ſo different from the Strain in which ſhe uſed to deſcribe her to herſelf in private, ſtill kept up her Suſpicions of her, ſhe did not think it prudent to declare them at this Time. As to *Maria*'s Unacquaintedneſs with the Houſe, ſhe ſaid ſhe had, for ſome Days before ſhe went away, been very diligent in her Enquiries into its Situation and other Particulars,

lars, as well as into the diſpoſing of the Servants, to which ſhe had unwittingly given ſuch Anſwers as might well enable her to find her Way out; and that, as to any Accomplices, ſhe could have none, and, ſhe ſuppoſed, in the Diſtraction ſhe went away in, never thought of the Neceſſity of having any. All this ſhe ſpoke without Heſitation or Change of Countenance, ſo that her Auditors began to think they had injured her by their Suſpicions. Mrs. *Worthy* alone ſtill was doubtful, as ſhe well remembered many of thoſe Inſinuations that had ſo eſtranged her from *Maria*.

The Night was now too far ſpent to take any Meaſures for recovering the loſt young Lady; but the next Day Meſſengers were diſpatched all over the Town in Search of her; Advertiſements were put into every News-Paper to deſire her Return, and promiſing a Reward to any Perſon who could give Tale or Tidings of her. Alas! all theſe Meaſures proved ineffectual; the lovely *Maria* was too well concealed for any Enquiry to find her out, as will preſently appear. But Providence, however, in about a Fortnight after, thought proper to diſcover to this mournful Family the Inſtruments of that Scene of Wretchedneſs, which now in all Likelihood preſented itſelf to the lovely Maid.

Couſens, who of all the Servants intereſted himſelf moſt, and deplored moſt ſincerely the Fate of *Maria*, as having been preſent when

when his Maſter firſt took her under his Protection, and who had a Veneration for that excellent Family, was perpetually talking upon the Subject when he went on his uſual Viſits to his Wife, and ſo infected the Woman with his Grief, that ſhe often recalled to her Mind the Incident of Mrs. *Worthy*'s ſurpriſing the young Ladies in her Apartment, and as often curſed, in her Heart, the Cauſe of that Uneaſineſs which ſucceeded. This Woman, though ſordid in her Diſpoſition, and infinitely greedy of any little Emoluments that *Sally Price* beſtowed on her, was not ſo depraved as to go great Lengths in Wickedneſs, and ſince that Time had been heartily tired of the Viſits of her and *Caſwall*, and, but that ſhe feared her Huſband ſhould know the clandeſtine Intercourſe ſhe had afforded them, and tell it to the Family, would long ago have forbid them her Houſe. Of late too they had become peculiarly troubleſome and offenſive, ſeldom met without Quarrelling and Noiſe, and ſhe had overheard *Maria*'s Name mentioned by them, about the Time of her Eſcape from Mr. *Worthy*'s, very frequently. All this, joined with her Huſband's Deſcription of the Diſtreſs his Maſter's Family, and particularly her Benefactreſs Miſs *Henrietta*, was in upon her Account, determined her, if poſſible, to find an Opportunity of over-hearing their Diſcourſe, and gathering from thence a Certainty if they were not privy to her Flight, which

which ſhe reſolved to impart to the Family, as the only Means of being pardoned for what had paſſed before at her Apartment.

The wiſhed Opportunity ſoon arrived, and ſhe overheard with Terror the Methods *Sally* had taken, not only to ſet her Lady againſt *Maria*, but to induce *Maria* to quit the Family; and that the Subject of her Reproach of *Caſwall* was his not having ſecured her, ſomewhere or ſomehow, from ever appearing again, even if he had murdered her, inſtead of ſelling her to ſomebody, whoſe Name ſhe did not perfectly hear. "Damn you," ſhe heard him ſay in return, "your Heart is harder than mine; for my "Part, I could not help commiſerating the "innocent Creature, when I conſidered in- "to what Hands I put her, from which ſhe "can never eſcape. I am ſorry I did it; "for the fifty Guineas that were promiſed "me I ſhall never be paid: And what did "we do all this for? Merely to preſerve "you in your Place; as if there was any "Likelihood of that young Lady's aſſu- "ming the Character of a Lady's Woman: "No, no, take my Word, ſhe was born "to command, and not to be a Servant; "nor does it appear from your Maſter and "Miſtreſs's talking ſo about her, that they "ever intended her for it. So we have "done an Act that ought to damn us for "ever, merely from your idle Suſpicions of "what could never happen. She's a charm- "ing Creature, to be ſure; and by G—d I

"could

"could hardly forbear reaping the firſt "Fruits of my Villainy, by being before-"hand with her Purchaſer: But I was out "of Caſh; and her Innocence, and the "Dignity of her Mien, awed me into the "humble Character of a Farmer in Reality, "which I only put on in Appearance; ſo "that methought I was to her no more "than a Servant." This Declaration drew many bitter Reproaches from *Sally* for his Ingratitude and intentional Falſehood, which *Caſwall* anſwered as furiouſly, telling her ſhe was now in his Hands, and he would make her do as he thought proper, or ſoon make her Miſtreſs's Houſe too hot to hold her; and they parted that Evening with Menaces of Vengeance on each Side.

If Mrs. *Couſens* was before tired of her Gueſts, ſhe now heard them with Deteſtation; bleſſed her Stars that ſhe was no further in League with them; and, in fine, reſolved to impart to Miſs *Henrietta* all ſhe had heard; not only from a Motive of Safety to herſelf, but from a real Commiſeration of *Maria*, whoſe Fate ſat heavy on her Mind, and whom it was ſufficient but once to ſee, to love.

This Reſolution was no ſooner formed, but ſhe dreſſed herſelf, and went to Mr. *Worthy*'s, under pretence of ſpeaking to her Huſband, whom ſhe deſired to let his young Lady know, that ſhe wanted to ſee her, as privately as poſſible, having ſome Tidings to impart to her of Miſs *Maria*. The honeſt

Fellow

Fellow ſtood agape at theſe Words, and was curious to know what ſhe had to ſay; but ſhe told him, he ſhould know when he next came home, and begged he would not delay one Moment to let Miſs *Henrietta* know what ſhe ſaid, with an Injunction that Mrs. *Price* ſhould not deliver the Meſſage, or even know ſhe was there.

He applied himſelf then to the Chamber-Maid, who happened to be in the Kitchen, and, calling her aſide, gave her her Inſtructions, which ſhe executed ſo dexterouſly, that Mrs. *Couſens* was introduced to Miſs *Henrietta*, without the leaſt Knowledge of Mrs. *Price*, and found her at Work in her Bed-Chamber.

It was after many eager Queſtions from the young Lady, and much Court'ſying, Bluſhing, and Heſitation of Mrs. *Couſens*, with a thouſand aukward and tedious Circumlocutions on her own Behalf, that ſhe was informed of what had lately paſſed at the good Woman's Houſe, which put her into ſuch a Tremor, that her Work fell from her Hands, and a Flood of Tears ſucceeded. "Alas! my poor *Maria*," ſhe cried, "how cruelly haſt thou been ſa-
"crificed! alas! into what villainous Hands
"art thou fallen!—But, if there is a juſt
"Being, as we are certain there is, he will
"deliver and avenge thee of thy Enemies.
"Oh! Wretch!" then ſhe exclaimed,
"a thouſand Deaths are too mild for ſuch
"Treachery as thine;—but the Hour of
"Vengeance

"Vengeance is come!—Abandoned Strum-
"pet!—What a Monſter have we foſtered
"in our Boſoms!—Alas! thou haſt occa-
"ſioned, I fear, more Miſchief than we
"are yet acquainted with!"—At this Concluſion ſhe got up, ſwift as Thought, and locking Mrs. *Couſens* into the Chamber, who trembled like an Aſpen-Leaf, went to ſeek her Papa, (who luckily was at home) and almoſt breathleſs, the Tears ſtreaming down her Cheeks, deſired his Company in her Apartment. He was greatly ſurpriſed, but followed her ſilently, and was ſoon informed of what had paſſed. His Anger and his Affliction ſurpaſſed that of his Daughter; and though he blamed Mrs. *Couſens* for her former Conduct, he applauded her for the Act of Juſtice ſhe had performed, and promiſed her his Protection. He ſent *Henrietta* to deſire her Mamma's Preſence. She found *Sally* with her, and was ready to faint at the Sight of her. Mrs. *Worthy* followed her directly; but when ſhe heard Mrs. *Couſens*'s black Relation, ſhe fainted, and it was ſome Minutes before they could recall her to her Senſes. It was then thought proper to confront the wretched Creature with Mrs. *Couſens*; and accordingly ſhe was ordered in before her Judges, wondering what could be the Meaning of the Command: Nor, even when ſhe ſaw Mrs. *Couſens*, could ſhe divine what her Preſence was deſired for, as ſhe had no Notion of her having been Witneſs to the Diſcourſe between her and *Caſwall*:

But

But her Doubts were ſoon cleared up when ſhe heard the Allegations againſt her, and was obliged, on Pain of being committed to Gaol, to anſwer all her Maſter's Queſtions, which were put to her with becoming Weight and Dignity, accompanied by a grave Severity, that made her tremble at every Word he uttered. Great as her Aſſurance naturally was, ſhe loſt all her Courage upon this trying Event: She owned her Familiarity with *Caſwall*; owned, that under the Guiſe of her Couſin, a Farmer, he had been the Inſtrument to convey *Maria* away; that he had her Directions, if poſſible, to put her on board ſome outward-bound Ship, to *Jamaica*, as a Servant, or to diſpoſe of her in ſuch other Manner as might prevent her ever returning again to Mr. *Worthy*'s: That her ſole Motive was the Fear that ſhe ſhould ſupplant her in her Miſtreſs's Favour; and that, to bring all this about, ſhe had whiſpered many Calumnies to her Lady, in order to ſet her againſt *Maria*, and, at the ſame Time worked upon that Lady, by diſplaying her Miſtreſs's Uneaſineſs, to come to that generous Reſolution, which had coſt her Liberty, if not her Life: That *Caſwall* was intimate with the Viſcount *Belvidere*, Son of the Earl of *Beaumont*, and, ſhe believed, had, for a conſiderable Sum of Money, put *Maria* into his Power: But where ſhe was, or where *Caſwall* carried her, ſhe profeſſed herſelf totally ignorant. She abjectly kneeled,

ed, after this Confeſſion, to her Maſter and Miſtreſs, begged their Pardon, wept, wrung her Hands, beſought the Interpoſition of Miſs *Henrietta*, and performed all that bad Perſons generally ſtoop to, when detected in their Villainies. Wretches that have no Principle, that ſtick at no Methods to bring about their Purpoſes, have no Fortitude, or real Dignity of Mind, and even ſink meanly under Detection; or elſe with Impudence and Bravado dare the worſt that can befal them.

Mr. *Worthy* was ſilent, waiting for his Lady's Sentiments, and willing that ſhe herſelf ſhould give Sentence upon her own Servant, which that Lady obſerving, ſaid, "Thou abominable Creature! doſt thou "imagine, after returning all the Benefits "I have beſtowed upon thee, by the baſeſt "Treachery and Ingratitude—after daring "to torture my Mind with the moſt wicked Reports, which had no Foundation, "by which I have been brought almoſt to "Death's Door—after cruelly expoſing an "innocent Lady to every poſſible Ill—that "thou canſt meet with Pardon? after confeſſing thyſelf, and acting as an abandoned Strumpet, thou canſt be ſuffered in "ſuch a Family as this? No: From this "Moment thou art diſcharged; and by To-"morrow's Dawn a Carriage ſhall be ready "to take thee to thy honeſt Father. If "thou haſt any Shame left, the Sight of "him, the Idea of bringing his grey Hairs

" with Sorrow to the Grave, will be ſuffi-
" cient Puniſhment. I ſhall write him an
" Account of your Crimes, and hope he'll
" endeavour to reform you: This Moment,
" but from Compaſſion to him, you ſhould
" be turned out of theſe Doors, never more
" to enter them.—This, Wretch! is my
" Determination.—Think yourſelf mildly
" treated, you, who have been guilty of
" every Crime; who have abuſed Confi-
" dence, ſtung to the Heart thoſe who foſter-
" ed you, and, which is worſt of all, plotted
" the Deſtruction of Innocence and Virtue,
" without the leaſt Reaſon or Provocation.
" Death itſelf, did the Laws permit it,
" would ſcarcely be an Expiation for thy
" numerous Offences."

Mr. *Worthy* and *Henrietta* highly applaud-ed Mrs. *Worthy*'s Sentence; and the for-mer, calling up *Tom Couſens*, ordered him to ſee *Price* to her Apartment, and lock her ſafely therein till the Morning, at which Time he ordered a Chaiſe to be ready, and a Guard to convey her to her Father's. This performed, and Mrs. *Couſens* having received her Thanks, and a noble Re-ward, it being now far advanced in the Night, Nature compelled them to take ſome Repoſe, to which they retired with heavy aching Hearts, filled with the Idea of what poor *Maria* muſt now be ſuffering.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

The vain Attempt to get Caſwall *into Cuſtody. Uncertainty of* Maria's *Fate, after every poſſible Enquiry further made.---Miſs* Henrietta *in Danger, but reſcued, and by whom.*

THE next Morning, as ſoon as the Family were ſtirring, *Sally* and her Baggage were put into the Chaiſe, and ſhe ſet off (attended by two Men on Horſeback armed, and the Curſes of all the Servants) for her Father's, with as much Reluctance as ſhe could have expreſſed at going to the Gallows. Several Servants, with a Peace-Officer, were alſo ſent to lie in wait at Mrs. *Couſens*'s for the Arrival of *Caſwall*, and had Orders to ſeize and bring him before Mr. *Worthy* or Mr. *Welldone*, who were both in the Commiſſion of the Peace: But by ſome Fatality he never came to the Houſe; by which it was imagined, that he was either quite tired of his *Dulcinea*, or was upon ſome other wicked Exploit; for he was not to be found at any of his Haunts in *London*. This greatly chagrined Mr. *Worthy*, as, either through Fear of Puniſhment, or for Reward, he doubted not of ſuch Intelligence from that abandoned young Man, as might lead to ſetting *Maria* at liberty. As to the Enquiries at the Earl of *Beaumont*'s, they were as fruitleſs; ſince, though the

Servants were all feed for that End, they could give no Account where Lord *Belvidere* was, as it was often his Cuſtom to retire for many Months into the remoteſt Parts of the Kingdom, for the freer Indulgence of his Vices and Paſſions. Mr. *Worthy* himſelf waited upon the old Lord, and even ſtooped ſo low as to beſeech him in the humbleſt Manner to inform him if *Maria* was in his Cuſtody: But he proteſted with ſo many Oaths that he knew nothing of her, that he was at length inclined to believe him. They were therefore obliged to leave her to her Fortune, never ceaſing to put up Prayers for her Health, Safety, and Delivery from her Enemies. But it ſat heavier upon *Henrietta* than either her Father or Mother; She had contracted a moſt tender Affection for Miſs *Maria*, and conſequently felt all the Pangs that a ſincere Friend muſt do in this Uncertainty of her Fate: Yet, as her Mamma was now become perfectly ſociable, and had really relinquiſhed all her whimſical Jealouſy, her Society was a great Relief to her Torment. Sometimes they viſited Mrs. *Welldone*, received Viſits from that amiable Lady, and mingled their ſympathetic Tears together. If ſhe mourned her long-loſt *Fanny*, they equally lamented their abſent *Maria*, and found ſome Relief in imparting their Griefs to each other. The Seaſon for both Families retiring to their Country-Seats was now arrived, which, in hopes of ſome Tidings of *Maria*, Mr. *Worthy* had longer deferred

deferred than uſual. Beſides, as Mr. *Worthy* perceived the Diſtreſs the Ladies were under, he was loth to hurry them into Solitude, as it might too powerfully adminiſter to their Sorrows. At length, however, they reſolved to depart, and went to take their Farewell of all their Friends. But one Morning, as Miſs *Henrietta* was returning, alone and on Foot, which ſhe often choſe, from Lady *Vicars*'s, at the End of *Pall-Mall*, a well-dreſſed genteel Man accoſted her, and begged the Favour to be indulged in a few Words to her, relative to a Lady who claimed ſome Acquaintance with her, named *Maria*. At hearing that well-remembered Name, ſhe ſtopped, and eagerly bid him ſay on. "Madam," he returned, "Humani-
"ty has induced me to find you out, and
"I was coming to your Houſe for that Pur
"poſe; but having formerly had the Ho
"nour to ſee you in *Yorkſhire*, my Houſe
"not being far from your Father's Seat, I
"happily recognized you, though I was on
"the other Side of the Way: Miſs *Maria*
"is at an Aunt's of mine not far from
"hence, having (but the Story is too long
"at preſent) been reſcued by me from the
"Hands of her baſe Raviſher; but ſhe is
"now ſo ill, that her Life is not expected
"many Hours. All her Lamentations are
"after you; ſhe perpetually calls upon
"your Name, and it would be an Act of
"great Goodneſs if you would condeſcend
"to ſee her. I will wait upon you, Ma-

"dam, this Inſtant, to my Aunt's, who "will be proud of the Honour of your "Company; or, if you will permit me to "attend you to Lady *Vicars*'s again, my "Chariot ſtands at her Door, and will con-"vey you there with more Expedition." The lovely *Henrietta*, hearing all theſe Circumſtances ſo plauſibly related, could not bear the Thought of deferring one Moment her Attendance upon *Maria*, thanked the Gentleman for the Offer of his Chariot, but told him ſhe would not even go Home before ſhe ſaw the young Lady he mentioned; upon which he very reſpectfully walked by her Side to *Charing-Croſs*, thro' the *Mews*, and ſo on to a very handſome Houſe near *St. Martin's Lane*; and handing her into a Parlour ſuperbly furniſhed, a genteel, well-dreſſed Woman, in Years, welcomed her to her Houſe, and told her ſhe would go up into the young Lady's Chamber, and prepare her for the agreeable Surpriſe ſhe would be in at ſuch a Viſit, and which might otherwiſe, in her weak State, be detrimental to her. Miſs *Henrietta* ſtaid with great Patience for ſome Minutes, when the old Lady again made her Appearance, and begged her to walk up Stairs with her. After paſſing through a great Number of Rooms, and entering one, ſeemingly in the moſt remote Part of the Houſe, all on a ſudden her Conductreſs ſtepped back, and flinging the Door to, which had a Spring-Lock, the poor young Lady, in the greateſt Terror imaginable,

imaginable, found herſelf a Priſoner. She now blamed her great Imprudence in thus putting herſelf into the Power of a Stranger, who, by ſome Means or other, ſhe made no Doubt, had heard *Maria*'s Story, and made uſe of it to decoy her for ſome bad Purpoſe. This Thought ſo terrified her, that ſhe had like to have fallen into a Swoon; but had ſoon Occaſion to recall all her Courage, as a dreadful Trial indeed was preparing for her.

The Door opened, and preſented to her View the fore-mentioned old Lady, with the Nephew who had conducted her to the Houſe. "Miſs," cried the former, "don't "be ſurpriſed at my having locked the "Door upon you, in a Houſe where I hope "you will ſoon command, ſince it belongs "to this Gentleman, who has long had an "Affection for you, and, not being able to "tell you his Paſſion, contrived, by the "Story of Miſs *Maria*, to bring you to a "Place where he may at Leiſure impart to "you his Sufferings.—I leave you to your-"ſelves, not doubting you will extend your "Pity to ſuch an ardent Love as he bears "you." So ſaying, before the amazed young Lady could recover her Speech, ſhe flew out of the Room, drawing the Door again after her. The Gentleman then approaching her, begged her to forgive his Artifice, which flowed from the moſt ſincere Paſſion that ever took Poſſeſſion of a Human Breaſt; told her, Deſpair of obtaining a Lady ſo ſuperior to him in Fortune had driven

him to such an Extremity; that his Flame admitted of no Delay or Abatement; and if she would consent to be his, he had a Clergyman at hand, who would authorize their Union with the Ceremony of the Church. Here he paused, whilst Fear, Anger, Disdain, were making strange Ravage in *Henrietta*'s Breast. "How dare you," she cried, "whoever you are, put me under Confinement? Do you know whose Daughter I "am, and the Consequence to yourself of "such a Crime as you have committed? "'Tis true, too true, you have me in your "Power; but dare you think of putting "me into further Danger?" Then, a little softening her Voice, and willing to try what Policy might effect, "If, as you tell me, "you have a Regard for me, why did you "never contrive to make it known to me or "my Father, whose generous Manner of "Thinking, if he approved your Character, would incline him to pass over the "Objection of Want of Fortune? If you "would prove your Esteem for me properly, "this Minute re-conduct me to the Place "where I was first accosted by you; leave "me to return to my Father's; and what "Effect your Behaviour may have upon me, "a little Time may determine. Surely no "Man that had a Regard for me would "keep me in this Terror!"—Indeed she was at this Minute trembling from Head to Foot; she had marked the Wretch's Countenance during the Time of this Discourse,

and

and was terrified by it: He reddened and grew pale alternately; he bit his Lip, and his Perſon was in a univerſal Tremor. Gloomily caſting his Eyes downwards, he heard the enchanting Maid; but the Struggle within him was not the Conflict of irreſolute Vice and returning Virtue. Alas! he had been long a Stranger to the Feelings of Humanity. His own Intereſt and Safety were the Sum and Subſtance of his Reflections, and he was weighing in his Mind, whether it was moſt likely to be promoted by according with *Henrietta*'s Deſire, or by purſuing his preſent abominable Scheme. It was ſoon determined for the latter: That appeared to him, all alone and expoſed to his Inſults as ſhe was, moſt likely to anſwer his Purpoſe, and could not, he thought, but ſucceed. Beſide, had that not been the Caſe, the Charms and Graces which ſported in *Henrietta*'s Face and Perſon, and muſt raiſe Deſire in the coldeſt Breaſt, had their uſual Effect even upon him. He advanced then again towards her, and beſought her, ſtill with a mild Accent, to be ſeated and hear him, (for till that Moment they were ſtanding) and partly by Force compelled her to ſit down, whilſt he held her fair Hand within his own, which ſhe ſtruggled to get looſe from the rude Graſp. Muſtering up all his Aſſurance, he let her know, that as ſhe was abſolutely in his Power, and by no Human Means could be delivered from it, he would not give up all

the flattering Hopes he had of immediate Poſſeſſion for uncertain and precarious Expectations; that his Family was of equal Rank with her own; that his Love was far ſuperior to the Power of Expreſſion, and ſhe might judge of its Force by its Effects; ſeeing he muſt now be reduced to conquer her Averſion, or to expoſe himſelf to the Rigour of thoſe Laws he knew he had greatly offended: Therefore, as her Happineſs was his Aim, even more than his own, ſhe had it in her Option, either to give him her Hand willingly, or to part with that by Force which he had rather owe to her Pity and Generoſity. "I leave you, my dear "Creature," he added, "for a few Mi-"nutes, to deliberate upon what I have "ſaid, with this Aſſurance, that a Paſſion "like mine is not to be dallied with; that, "as it could impel me to proceed to ſuch "a Length as this, ſo it will be gratified, "if immediate Death were the Conſe-"quence." Worked up to the higheſt Pitch of Inſolence, at this Concluſion he, before ſhe was aware, ſnatched the lovely Creature to his Boſom, and joined his Lips to her Cheek, which ſhe reſented by a Blow over his Face, expreſſive of her Anger and Contempt, which, but that Fear was of the Party, would have, though ineffectually, diſplayed themſelves more emphatically. In Haſte he then left her, carefully locking the Door after him; and to deſcribe the Situation of Mind he left her in is impoſſible.

Tears,

Tears, Sighs, and Sobs, immediately ſucceeded; a thouſand Times ſhe called upon Heaven to hear and deliver her, whilſt ſhe examined all Parts of the Room to ſee if there was any Proſpect of Eſcape: But what a Depth of Deſpondency was ſhe reduced to, when not a Door or Crevice was to be diſcovered but that by which ſhe entered! and ſurveying the Window, ſhe found it looked into a Back-Yard, confined by a high Wall on one Side, and on the others by adjacent Houſes, ſo that an Eſcape was impoſſible. Though *Henrietta* had Courage and Fortitude ſuperior to the generality of her Sex, this diſmal Proſpect almoſt exhauſted all her Spirits, and her Strength and Senſes would immediately have failed her, if the Sound of ſeveral Voices in the oppoſite Houſe had not a little contributed to ſupport her. Hence ſhe gathered a Gleam of Hope, and ſummoning up all her remaining Strength, ſhe cried out, *Murder! Murder!* ſeveral times, and her Voice was not unnoticed by thoſe ſhe meant to alarm. Several Men flew to the Window oppoſite to her, and one of them, who appeared to her like an Angel ſent from Heaven to her Reſcue, in a gentle Voice, fixing his Eyes upon her lovely Form with Wonder and Surpriſe, enquired the Meaning of her Exclamation. She had juſt Time to anſwer, "For Heaven's Sake, Sir, "have Pity upon me, and, if you can, de-"liver me from this vile Houſe, to which "I have been decoyed, and am on the Brink

"of

" of Ruin! I am the Daughter of Mr. " *Worthy*, of *St. James's*, who will nobly " reward you! Oh! Sir, Gentlemen! re- " lieve me, if you can, from my Diſtreſs! " A Minute's Delay will finiſh my Deſtruc- " tion!" If her harmonious Voice, and her plaintive Action, had not had the proper Effect, the Agitation ſhe was in, and the Heightening it gave to her native Beauty, could not be ſeen, without producing thoſe Reſolutions in her Favour that ſhe expected. " Madam," the ſame kind Voice anſwered, " you are in a wretched Houſe " indeed—we know it.—I'll haſten to your " Relief, and I'll die or deliver you." Juſt at that Moment her Raviſher again appeared; he had only retired to ſecure all the Avenues to the Apartment, and to give ſuch Directions to the Woman of the Houſe that he might have no Interruption in his vile and baſe Purpoſes: But he was diſconcerted greatly when he found the Window open, and heard theſe Words,—" Oh! Sir, make " Haſte;—Heavens bleſs you for your ge- " nerous Reſolution!"—" Ha! Madam," he had the Inſolence to cry, " have you thus " abuſed my Indulgence?—You have found " Friends then, it ſeems; but all the World " ſhall not deliver you out of my Hands; " and Deſpair will finiſh what Love per- " haps could not effect." So ſaying, he attempted to drag her towards the Bed; but the Proſpect of Deliverance had given her ſuch additional Strength and Courage, that he

he found more Difficulty, than he expected in the Execution of his Purpoſe; whilſt her tranſporting Boſom, in the rude Struggle, was robbed of its Veil, her diſhevelled Locks fell down her Shoulders, and her Arms wore the Marks of the rugged Graſps ſhe experienced. In vain ſhe would have continued to implore Mercy and Compaſſion of the Mercileſs and Obdurate. Her Forces were forſaking her, and her Ruin would have been complete, if a Noiſe of breaking the Doors of the adjacent Rooms had not arreſted the Attention of her Raviſher, and in a Moment afterwards the Door of the Apartment had not been alſo forced open; when a Gentleman entered with his Sword drawn, to whom ſhe flew for Protection, and fainted away at his Feet. Happy Inſenſibility! which ſhielded her from a Sight that muſt have made too deep an Impreſſion upon her tender Nature. The Raviſher drew a Piſtol from his Pocket, and fired it at her Deliverer; but the Ball providentially miſſed him, when he plunged his Sword into the Wretch's Boſom, who fell weltering in his Blood, and curſing the Hand that inflicted ſo deſerved a Puniſhment.

The dreadful Deed was no ſooner performed than the Room, nay the whole Houſe, was filled with the Neighbours, (drawn by the Cry of Murder, the Report of the Piſtol, and the Hubbub made below Stairs) and the Companions of the generous Youth,

Youth, who ſtood gazing his very Soul away on one Side, whilſt Pity for the Fellow-Creature he had wounded drew frequently his Eyes and Sighs on the other. Recollecting himſelf, however, with the Aſſiſtance of two or three good Women preſent, the ſtill inſenſible *Henrietta* was conveyed to a Bed in a neighbouring Apartment; and unable, from the tender Sentiments that had already begun to riſe in his Boſom, to quit the charming Object, he beſought his Friends to look after the wounded Man, to ſend for a Surgeon, and, if poſſible, preſerve his Life, that he might meet with the public Puniſhment he believed he would be found to deſerve; and obſerving a Gentlewoman, a Neighbour's Wife, much affected with the Lady's Condition, with a peculiar Delicacy he deſired her not to leave her, but to await the Return of her Senſes, and attend her till ſhe could be conveyed from the dreadful Houſe, fearful ſhe would be ſhocked at ſeeing only Men about her, and adding, with a Sigh, "though I have, alas! no Power to ſtir "from her." She promiſed to do as ſhe was deſired, and returned—"A dreadful "Houſe indeed, Sir, has this been for "many Months, and a Terror and Re-"proach to the whole Neighbourhood.— "We have often heard the Cry of diſtreſſed "Innocence, I fear! but People are too "cautious of embroiling themſelves with "wicked People, who ſtick at nothing to "wreak

"wreak their Revenge on thoſe that op-
"poſe them."—"Yes," the Gentleman replied, "I have long known it to be a moſt
"abominable Houſe, though 'tis the firſt
"Time I ever ſet my Foot within it. Hap-
"py for this young Lady that myſelf and
"thoſe Gentlemen were at the Billiard-
"Table in the Houſe behind it, and that
"ſhe had Preſence of Mind to call for our
"Aſſiſtance, otherwiſe the Conſequences
"might have been very fatal to her. I
"have heard of her Family, which is a
"good one, and can only at preſent ex-
"preſs my Surpriſe and Wonder how ſhe
"came here. As to the Woman of the
"Houſe, ſhe fled out of Doors, during the
"Hurry of our firſt Entrance, with all her
"Females; but I hope however they will
"ſpeedily be brought to Juſtice, and that
"your Neighbourhood will be cleared of
"ſuch a deſtructive Crew."

During this Diſcourſe the charming *Henrietta* was not neglected; the Women rubbed her Temples with *Hungary* Water, and made uſe of every Method to bring her to herſelf; and at length ſhe opened her languiſhing Eyes, and gazed about her with a wild Aſtoniſhment that made them fear for her Reaſon. The benevolent Stranger was greatly alarmed at the Sight; and gently taking her Hand in his, and eyeing her with extreme Tenderneſs and Reſpect, he ſaid, "Dear Madam, compoſe yourſelf;—you
"have none but Friends about you;—en-
"deavour

" deavour to calm your Spirits, and let me " have the Happineſs of reſtoring you to " your Parents, who muſt be in the utmoſt " Diſtreſs, if your Abſence has been longer " than uſual."---Seeing her fix her Eyes intently upon him, he continued, " Alas! " Madam, you have no Enemies to dread " ---and my Wonder is great that you " ſhould excite in any Breaſt other than " Sentiments of Reſpect and Veneration!" The Sigh that accompanied theſe Words was a plain Indication of the Situation of his Heart to all the By-ſtanders, and was not unnoticed by the lovely Maid that ſo much engaged his Solicitude. Now perfectly herſelf, though ſtill weak and faint; ſhe recollected with Horror the Situation ſhe had been juſt relieved from, which made her ſhudder; then a Glow of Pleaſure gleamed over her Mind, when ſhe revolved her almoſt miraculous Deliverance;---a modeſt Bluſh painted her Cheeks when ſhe reflected on the Diſorder her Perſon and Apparel muſt have been in before Strangers, particularly thoſe of the other Sex, though now ſhe found, by the Care of the Females, ſhe was arrayed with proper Decency. She could not help at the ſame Inſtant looking at her Deliverer with a reſpectful Gratitude, and with a Tenderneſs ſhe never before had experienced. She did not forget the Condition her Parents alſo would be in, upon the Length of her Abſence from home, as ſhe perceived the Cloſe of Day was approaching.

proaching. All theſe Thoughts, crouding at once into her Mind, alternately affected her Countenance: Now Colours more ſtriking than any Nature or Painting, one would imagine, could diſplay, warmed her Cheeks; then a Paleneſs like the Lily's Hue ſucceeded; Tranſitions which, in ſo beauteous a Face and Perſon, ſerved to render her ſtill more adorable. Raiſing herſelf up, with a modeſt Grace ſhe fixed her Eyes on the ſtrange Gentleman, after gently withdrawing her Hand from his, who, but for that Action, ſeemed to hold it as his own, and returned,---"I ſhould be very criminally ungrateful, Sir, not to acknowledge, that from you I derive my Safety, my Liberty, my Life, and what is dearer to me than Life, my Honour. Finiſh, Sir, what you have ſo generouſly begun---deliver me to my Parents; they will thank you more emphatically than I can do; for, alas! I feel your ineſtimable Favours more ſenſibly than it would become me to expreſs." Then turning to the Ladies, ſhe paid them her Acknowledgments in a Manner that greatly contributed to raiſe her in their Eſtimation, and gave them a brief Account of the Adventure which had brought her to this wretched Houſe; at which they all expreſſed their Surpriſe and Indignation. Her Deliverer liſtened to every Word ſhe uttered with ſuch Attention---his Eyes were riveted upon her with ſuch Fixedneſs, as once or twice, when ſhe looked

looked towards him, gave him ſome Confuſion. He ſeemed to have loſt the Faculty of Speech, and his whole Soul to be collected into his Eyes. At length, recovering himſelf, he ſaid, "I leave you, my "dear Lady, with theſe worthy Women "but for a Moment, whilſt I ſend for my "Equipage, in which I hope to have the "Honour of attending you home, and "mean time will deſire you not to make "any particular Enquiries into the Conſe-"quences of your happy Delivery, as ſome "Incidents may too greatly ſhock your "weakened Spirits."---Here he ſeemed to indicate to the Women a Deſire of Secrecy by an emphatical Look, which they could not miſtake.---"Alas! I ſhall not be happy "till you are out of this helliſh Place, "where perhaps never ſo much Beauty and "Virtue was ever before ſeen." She bluſhed, and bowed, and he left the Room. After ſending a Meſſenger to order his Coach to the Door, he went into the Room, where ſtill his Companions were aſſembled, and the Surgeon had juſt examined and dreſſed his Patient, who was yet alive, and faintly deſired to ſee the Lady he had uſed ſo ill. His Antagoniſt having been whiſpered by the Surgeon, that his Wound was mortal, and that it would not be long before he expired, ſhewed a great Concern, and approaching the Bed, ſaid, "Unhappy "Man, I am ſincerely grieved at the Hurt "you have received, and hope you are full

"of

" of Repentance for the Outrage you have " committed on a virtuous young Creature " that never gave you the leaſt Offence, " and does not even know you. Bad as " your Principles muſt be, as your Date of " Life is now likely to be very ſhort, (for " ſo the Surgeon informs me) endeavour " to make your Peace with offended Heaven, " by a frank Confeſſion of the Motives of " your late vile Attempt, and by a ſincere " Contrition for the Wickedneſs of your " paſt Life, that the Mercy of Providence " may be enabled to extend itſelf to your " departing Spirit. As to the Lady, hap- " pily ſhe does not know of your Condi- " tion; and ſhe has ſuffered ſo greatly al- " ready, that I don't think it prudent to " give her a freſh Shock by informing her " thereof: But I will faithfully relate all " you give me in Charge to her, and be- " lieve you may aſſure yourſelf of Pardon " from a Perſon of her gentle Mind, which " ſeems neither capable of harbouring Sen- " timents of Anger or Revenge."

The wounded Man, looking ghaſtly at him, returned,---" Ah! your Words ſtrike " deep into my Heart, and recal ten thouſand " Crimes to Memory, of which, in a ſhort, " but miſ-ſpent Life, I have been guilty. But " the laſt---this curſed Attempt upon Miſs " *Worthy*, let me call the greateſt, and de- " plore the moſt! Her Forgiveneſs for my " raſh, my villainous Deſign, would give " a Gleam of Comfort to my departing " Soul:

" Soul: But I cannot, indeed, expect ſuch
" a Favour.---I will then beſeech you to
" beg her to forgive an unfortunate Man,
" who has met with his deſerved Puniſh-
" ment!---May God, through his infinite
" Mercy, accept it, as an Atonement for
" my many Vices, my numerous Miſ-
" deeds.---I am, Sir--(but firſt let me
" tell you, I ſincerely forgive you, wiſh
" your Happineſs, and beg your Prayers)---
" the Son of a worthy Father, whoſe Grief
" for my unfortunate End, though unwor-
" thy of his Tenderneſs, whom I have ſo
" much diſobeyed and abuſed, will be ex-
" treme. My Name is *Caſwall*.---You muſt
" have heard of my Family.---Amongſt
" other Intrigues, I had one with a young
" Woman, Servant in Mr. *Worthy*'s Fa-
" mily, and baſe as myſelf, though much
" obliged to them. To gratify her, I enter-
" ed into a Scheme of removing from about
" her Miſtreſs and Miſs *Henrietta*, a young
" Lady they had taken under their Protec-
" tion, after Mr. *Worthy* had relieved her
" from great Diſtreſs. Though not known
" perſonally to the Family, from her I be-
" came acquainted with all that paſſed in it,
" and, under the Character of her Rela-
" lation, a Farmer, attended to carry off
" *Maria*, (for that was her Name) to my
" Houſe in *Kent*, where my Accomplice
" had told her ſhe might find a ſafe and
" ſecret Reſidence, in purſuance of a gene-
" rous Reſolution this wicked Creature had

" artfully

" artfully induced her to take, of quitting
" Mr. *Worthy*'s Houſe. Meantime an Ac-
" cident put it into my Power (inſtead of put-
" ting *Maria* on Ship-board for *America*,
" which had been ſuggeſted to me by my Fa-
" miliar, or of murdering her, which was
" alſo hinted to me) to diſpoſe of her Liberty
" to an old Friend and Crony, into whoſe
" Hands, for the Promiſe of 50 *l.* (which
" however has not been paid me) I con-
" trived to put her.---Thank God, I did not
" heighten my Wickedneſs, by defiling her
" myſelf, which my depraved Inclination
" often prompted me to, in the loneſome
" Journey I carried her, on the Night after
" her Flight. She was beautiful to the laſt
" Degree; but ſuch Virtue, ſuch Innocence,
" accompanied it, as ſomehow rendered
" it impoſſible for me to injure her, and
" awed me into Honeſty.---The Circum-
" ſtance of the young Lady's abſenting
" herſelf cauſed ſuch Suſpicions, I ſuppoſe,
" that my Accomplice was diſcharged the
" Family; and I have not ſeen her ſince.
" Fearing ſhe had betrayed me, I kept out
" of that Part of the Town; and now,
" reduced to the greateſt Diſtreſs, my Cre-
" dit gone, my Friends loſt, and my Fa-
" ther's Doors and Purſe ſhut againſt me,
" from a long Series of Wickedneſs and
" Extravagance, I meditated, by one
" Scheme, to reſtore myſelf to Fortune
" and Independency, moved thereto alſo by
" the Beauty of the Object, which, unknown

" to

" to her, I had often contemplated with
" Desire.---My Attack was to be made on
" a Part of the Family whom I had already
" so much injured. I determined to get
" Miss *Henrietta Worthy* into my Power,
" and, by Persuasion or Force, to be mar-
" ried to her, and to enjoy her; after which,
" I made no Doubt, as my Family was a
" good one, and I was entitled to a consi-
" derable Fortune on the Death of my Fa-
" ther, I should be forgiven, and possess the
" great Fortune I knew her Father could
" bestow upon her. The Anxiety the Fa-
" mily were in for the Recovery of *Maria*,
" afforded me a Thought, that I ima-
" gined would succeed; but hearing they
" were going from *London*, I began to de-
" spair of my Project; when, Yesterday, I
" accidentally saw Miss *Henrietta* alone
" come out of Lady *Vicars*'s; and, having
" long made Mrs. *Coventry*, the Mistress of
" this d——d House, privy to my Scheme,
" (who had even assisted me with Monies
" upon the Credit of it, and whose House
" was to be the Scene of her Violation)
" I artfully decoyed the young Lady here,
" under Pretence of my having delivered
" Miss *Maria* from her Ravisher, and her
" being very ill here, at my Aunt's, as
" I called it. The rest you have been
" Witness to; and I bless Heaven that I
" was arrested in my cruel Purpose, before
" I had committed a Deed, which, alas!
" would have shut the Ears of Mercy

" againſt my Supplications.—Oh! pardon!
" pardon! gracious Heaven!---pardon a
" Wretch, foul with innumerable Sins and
" Iniquities, which now weigh his Soul
" down with inſupportable Torment!---
" Oh! Redeemer of the World, whoſe
" Precepts I have every way diſobeyed,
" what Hope can I have that thy precious
" Blood will atone for my Offences!—
" Oh! I have not ſinned without know-
" ing it!---I have perverted Inſtruction,
" diſappointed the Effects of a good Edu-
" cation, and, in every thing, acted againſt
" the Light of my Mind, and the Convic-
" tion of my Judgement!"—Here his Spi-
rits, after the Loſs of ſuch a Quantity of Blood as had iſſued from his Wound, became quite exhauſted, and he ſpoke too low to be heard, though his Lips continued to move. The Gentlemen round the Bed imagined he was expiring, and ſincerely deplored his Fate, which perhaps was no unedifying Leſſon to them all. He revived again however, and turning his Head towards the Perſon he had before addreſſed, (who humanely took hold of his Hand, and gave him all the Conſolation he could) ſaid, " One Act of Juſtice more, and I
" ſhall die releaſed from a grievous Burden.
" ---Miſs *Maria* is in the Poſſeſſion of
" Lord———Oh!"—With this unfiniſhed Sentence, the poor Wretch gave up the Ghoſt: A dreadful Inſtance of the Divine Diſpleaſure,

Diſpleaſure, and of the Puniſhment that often, in this Life, attends Vice and Debauchery.

After having ſomewhat recovered from the Melancholy his great Humanity had impreſſed upon his Mind, at this ſolemn Scene, he ſent to the neighbouring Magiſtrate to put proper Perſons in Poſſeſſion of the Houſe, and taking leave of his Friends, the benevolent Deliverer of *Henrietta* was informed his Coach was at the Door; whereupon he again entered into the Apartment where he had left that Lady, whom he found waiting eagerly for his Return, and ſupplied with ſuch Neceſſaries as ſhe wanted, by the Friendſhip of the Gentlewomen who were with her. He put on as much Gaiety as his natural Temper, and the late Incident, would permit him, and told her, now he was ready to attend her to *St. James's*, and hoped ſoon to deliver her from all her Fears. She anſwered, ſhe was prepared, and obliged to him that he would add that Favour to the many he had conferred upon her; then taking leave of her Female Attendants, and promiſing not to be ungrateful for their Kindneſs, ſhe was conducted by him to his Coach, into which having handed her, he ſtept himſelf, and ordered his Servants to drive them to Mr. *Worthy's*. As he was fearful ſtill of ſhocking her, he mentioned nothing of the late Affair, during their Paſſage to *St. James's*: Their Diſcourſe rolled on indifferent Matters; and *Henrietta*, now enlivened by her Deliverance,

and the Idea of ſoon ſeeing her Parents, finiſhed, by the Brilliancy of her Wit, and the Amiableneſs of her Sentiments, the Conqueſt ſhe had obtained over the Heart of the Stranger: Nor did the Politeneſs of his Addreſs, the Strength of his Reaſon, the Harmony of his Voice, and his fine Perſon, but, above all, that Humanity and Tenderneſs which ſeemed predominant in his Breaſt, give the charming Maid much leſs Prepoſſeſſion in his Favour.

When the Coach ſtopped at Mr. *Worthy*'s Door, he handed the young Lady into the Hall, where they were immediately ſurrounded by the rejoicing Servants, gratulating the Arrival of their Benefactreſs. The News ſoon flew to the aſtoniſhed Mr. *Worthy* and his Lady, who had been in the utmoſt Pain and Anxiety at her long Abſence, and apprehenſive ſome ſiniſter Accident had happened to her, when they found ſhe did not return before Dark. Their Apprehenſions had been increaſed, when, ſending to Lady *Vicars*'s, they had Advice of the Time of her departing from thence, and, after diſpatching Meſſengers to all their Acquaintance, could get no Tidings of this dear Daughter. The Situation of the tender Parents is better imagined than deſcribed; the Fate of poor *Maria* came into their Minds; and Mrs. *Worthy* feared, ſhe ſaid, that the preſent Event was a Puniſhment, ſevere indeed, for her Behaviour to that young Lady. Mr. and Mrs. *Well-*

done, hearing of this ſtrange Abſence, had come to condole with them; for it was, by this Time, Ten o'Clock at Night.

Henrietta flew to the Dining-Room, and flinging her Arms round her Mamma's Neck, and her Father's alternately, was ready to ſwoon with the ſtruggling Paſſions that agitated her Boſom: Theſe tender Parents careſſed her with more than common Affection; Mr. and Mrs. *Welldone* welcomed her ſafe Return, when, turning round, ſhe beheld her Conductor juſt entering the Room, and cried out eagerly, "Oh! my "dear Papa! behold my Guardian-An- "gel!---But for that Gentleman your *Hen-* "*rietta* had never ſeen you more, or had "ſeen you in a Condition to which Death "would have been greatly preferable!--- All Eyes were now turned towards the generous Stranger; and Mr. *Worthy*, advancing to him, paid him the moſt grateful Acknowledgements, adding, "Let future "Opportunities convince you, you have "obliged, in the higheſt Manner, a Man "who will never forget it, never think "your Goodneſs ſufficiently repaid: If "you can ſpend a few Hours with us, "we will hear from your Mouth, and "that of my Daughter, the Particulars of "this ſtrange Adventure of hers, as her "Words ſeem to imply it, and your Com- "pany will do us Pleaſure and Honour. "Though you are a Stranger to me, Sir, "I can readily conceive, that the Deliverer

"of

" of my *Henrietta* muſt be a Gentleman " of Virtue and Honour." He then introduced him to his Lady, Mr. and Mrs. *Welldone*; but when Mr. *Welldone* paid his Reſpects to him, how much were the whole Company ſurpriſed, when he exclaimed--- " What! my dear Colonel *Beaumont*, is " it you? Give me leave to ſay, with " Truth, that whatever Kindneſs you have " conferred upon my Friends, muſt be " increaſed in Value when they know the " Hand they owe it to."---" Ah! my " Friend," the Colonel returned, " there is " little Merit in ſerving that lovely Lady, " ſeeing every one that beholds her muſt " acknowledge ſhe has a Claim to their " Regard. That Compaſſion of a Fellow-" Creature in Diſtreſs, which, I hope, will " ever be a Principle of my Actions, was the " Motive ſimply that drew me to her Aſ-" ſiſtance: How great, how tranſporting " my Reward!---I have been able to be " uſeful to a Lady whoſe Mind and Per-" ſon were deſigned for a Bleſſing to the " World! happy alſo I eſteem myſelf, that " it is the Cauſe of my Introduction to " this little Circle," (bowing to the Company) " where, I hope, I ſhall ever be-" have ſo as to conciliate their Eſteem."

The Returns to this polite Addreſs, which had a wonderful Effect in his Favour upon Mr. and Mrs. *Worthy*, (who were a little prejudiced againſt him, on the Account of his Family) and which had its due Weight

with *Henrietta*, were equally elegant; and now, Supper being ready, they partook of a friendly Repaſt, during which the Regards paid by the Colonel to Miſs *Henrietta* were not unnoticed, and raiſed different Reflections in the Minds of the Company. After Supper they adjourned to an inner Apartment, when Mr. *Worthy* deſired his Daughter to relate the Adventure that had ſo many Hours deprived them of her. The young Lady, with great Modeſty and Delicacy, recounted the whole of what ſhe had ſuffered, to her afflicted Parents, who accompanied her with frequent Denunciations of Vengeance on the Heads of her Perſecutors, in which they were joined by their Friends, whilſt the Colonel hung with Rapture on the Accents of her melodious Voice, which every Moment made ſtronger Impreſſions on his Boſom. But when ſhe painted her final Diſtreſs, under the lawleſs Graſp of the Villain that decoyed her, and her Condition when her Deliverer appeared, no Terror could exceed that with which they were agitated: They bleſſed the Colonel; they embraced their Daughter; and it was ſome time after the Cloſe of her Narration, before they could think with any Degree of Compoſure or Reaſon about ſo ſtrange, and ſo audacious an Attempt. They were entering into many Conjectures, as to the Motives for, and the Inſtruments in this Villainy, when the Colonel ſaid, "I "believe, Sir," (addreſſing himſelf to Mr.

Worthy) "I can inform you, both of the "Motives for, and the Perpetrators of the "Outrage upon this Lady, to whom I "was fearful to relate, in her weak and "depreſſed Situation, the Tragedy that "attended her Deliverance. After firing "a Piſtol at me, the Ball of which paſſed "cloſe to my Head, I run the Wretch "through the Body, and he died before I "left the Houſe, after making a Confeſſion "of what you muſt be ſo deſirous to know." He then related what occurred in the laſt Moments of *Caſwall*, at the Mention of whoſe Name their Aſtoniſhment, if poſſible, was encreaſed more than ever. "Alas! then," ſaid Mrs. *Worthy*, "the vile Fellow is gone "to anſwer for all his Crimes: Unhappy for "poor *Maria*, and for us, that he could not "finiſh his laſt Sentence! Perhaps Provi-"dence, that watches over the Innocent and "Virtuous, might have afforded the Means "of delivering her alſo from her Diſtreſſes."

To enumerate the warm and lively Acknowledgements that were paid to the Colonel, for his noble Behaviour towards *Henrietta*, would be unneceſſary. The Reader may well imagine how much he was careſſed; and, charmed with his Converſation, his Father and Brother's Demerits were totally forgotten, whilſt every one joined in deſiring him to make his Viſits as frequent as poſſible, and Mr. *Worthy* aſſured him he ſhould be tranſported if he would conſider his Houſe as his own.

CHAP. X.

Some further Particulars relative to the late Adventure.---Colonel Beaumont *makes great Progreſs in the Affections of his Miſtreſs.---His amiable Behaviour.---Some Anecdotes of the lamented Fair-One.*

PURSUANT to an Appointment of the Night before, the Colonel, Mr. *Worthy*, and Mr. *Welldone*, met at the *Smyrna*, and from thence proceeded to Juſtice *Foreſight*'s, whoſe People were put in Poſſeſſion of the Houſe, late *Coventry*'s, which was the Scene of the late Diſturbance. That wicked Woman was then in Cuſtody, with ſeveral of her Nymphs, the latter of whom were committed to *Bridewell* to hard Labour. As to the old Bawd, as they could have no Proof of her conſpiring with *Caſwall* in his late Attempt, but the Teſtimony of Miſs *Henrietta*, as to her Manner of Behaviour, and her carrying on the Farce of *Maria*'s Illneſs, and making her a Priſoner in her Houſe, the Gentlemen contented themſelves with reſerving her to the Judgment of a Quarter-Seſſions, whereby ſhe was ſoon after ſentenced to a long Impriſonment in *Newgate*. The Houſe, to the great Joy of the Neighbours, was ſhut up, after the Landlord had diſtrained for his Rent, and the Body of *Caſwall* was delivered to his Father

Father for Burial. The Colonel and his Friends Depoſitions were taken, as to the Manner of his Death, and, in due Time, he was honourably acquitted of it in a public Court of Juſtice. The Women that ſo kindly aſſiſted Miſs *Henrietta* had valuable Preſents made them by that young Lady; and the Colonel and his Friends were invited to a ſuperb Entertainment at Mr. *Worthy*'s, where every thing rare and delicious was provided, to teſtify the Senſe that Gentleman and his Lady retained of their late Readineſs to fly to their Daughter's Reſcue.

Peace was now once more reſtored to this amiable Family, which had no Sorrow remaining, but on account of the unfortunate *Maria*, whoſe Loſs they continued ſincerely to deplore.

The Colonel ſpent moſt of his Time in their delightful Company, and that Family and Mr. *Welldone*'s were quite inſeparable. The melancholy Regrets of the latter for their long-loſt Daughter, and thoſe of the *Worthys* for poor *Maria*, linked them in a kind of Uniſon of ſympathetic Grief.

Mean time the Colonel, by his Aſſiduity and noble Behaviour, made ſuch a Progreſs in the Affections of *Henrietta*, who could not reſiſt ſo much Merit, and ſuch great Obligations, that nothing ſeemed wanting on his Side, but a Declaration of his Paſſion, to ſecure a proper Return; and the amiable

Creature expected it with ſome Degree of Impatience, and thought it ſtrange, that, though every Day diſcovered more and more his Attachment and Tenderneſs to her, yet he never had formally declared himſelf her Lover. But the Family were at length preparing to leave Town for their Seat in *Berkſhire*, in the Neighbourhood of which Mr. *Welldone* had a Country Villa, to which he had retired with his excellent Conſort for near a Fortnight. The Day was fixed for their Departure, which the Colonel contemplated with much Uneaſineſs, and, in the View of ſo long an Abſence from the Idol of his Soul, was reſolved to break thro' his Silence.

One Morning he found *Henrietta* ſitting alone in the Dining-Room; and thinking it the moſt favourable Opportunity, after his Irreſolution and Diffidence had kept him ſome time ſilent, during which he eyed her with inexpreſſible Tenderneſs and Reſpect, and put her into ſome Agitation of Mind, he gently took her Hand, and cried, "Oh! "Miſs, then I muſt ſoon loſe the Happi-"neſs I have ſo long enjoyed! But"—here his Voice faultered, and his Reſolution again forſaking him, he looked now on the dear Face, and then, as fearful of offending, caſt his Eyes to the Ground, whilſt the Alterations of his Countenance were a plain Index of what paſſed in his Mind. Nor, by this unfiniſhed Sentence, was *Henrietta*

rietta thrown into much leſs Confuſion; her Cheeks glowed with Bluſhes, and ſhe wiſhed he would finiſh what he was going to ſay, that ſhe might be delivered from the Embarraſſment ſhe was under. At length he had Courage to reſume,—"Alas! Ma-"dam, have you never perceived how much "I am devoted to you? How then can I "bear ſo long an Abſence? I, who, from "the Moment I ſaw that lovely Face, have "never ceaſed to contemplate it with Rap-"ture, and who have ſeen ſuch Inſtances "of the Excellence of your Mind and Sen-"timents, ſo conformable to all that a "Man of Senſe and Virtue would wiſh in "the ſofter Sex! Permit me, dear Lady, "to hope your Affection is not engaged to "any other, and that you will not treat "the Offer of my Heart with Diſdain, but "pity a Paſſion which is the more violent "for ſuffering ſo long a Concealment, and "which perhaps only the Dread of Ab-"ſence would yet have impelled me to a "Declaration of, ſo unworthy I appear to "myſelf of poſſeſſing ſo much Perfection." Here he flung himſelf on his Knee before her, and continued,—"I not only know "my own Unworthineſs, but that my For-"tune in Life is ſomewhat inferior to what "your Father might expect in a Huſband "for his dear *Henrietta*; but the Goods of "Fortune are not neceſſary to true Happi-"neſs! If I am bleſſed with you, my warm "Endeavours to better my Circumſtances,

" by every honourable Means, may per-
" haps place you in a Situation equal to all
" his Wiſhes. Tell me, my Charmer, oh!
" tell me, if you have no Averſion to *Beau-*
" *mont*; and, if he makes Application to
" your Parents for their Licence to addreſs
" you, whether you will not be averſe to
" his Wiſhes, and make him for ever mi-
" ſerable?"

Unable to look at her after this Declaration, he held down his Head, waiting her Sentence. The lovely *Henrietta*, who was ſuperior to the little Arts of her Sex, and whoſe Lips never uttered what was foreign to her Heart, after ſome Moments Pauſe, returned,—" I ſhould be to the laſt Degree
" ungrateful, Sir, did I not preſerve for
" Colonel *Beaumont* the greateſt Eſteem
" imaginable; and in anſwer to his flat-
" tering Declaration, I muſt aſſure him, I
" am far from having the leaſt Averſion to
" him; nay, perhaps, if ever I alter my
" Condition, no Man breathing would ſo
" nearly ſuit my Idea of what a Huſband
" ſhould be, as himſelf. I know my Pa-
" pa's Sentiments too well to think he will
" form any Objections in regard to For-
" tune, when my Happineſs is at ſtake;
" and I aſſure you I can never be happy if
" Colonel *Beaumont* is miſerable."

So generous, ſo noble a Declaration from the young Lady, even painfully oppreſſed him with Joy and Gratitude. A thouſand times be bleſſed the Lips that pronounced

thoſe

thoſe tranſporting Accents; his Acknowledgements were too animated to leave his Sentiments doubtful; and the ſoft, the endearing Moments that afterwards intervened, before the good Mr. *Worthy* and his Lady joined them, proved how dear they were to each other. An unuſual Solemnity, and ſomewhat of Conſtraint, was ſo viſible in the two Lovers, from the aukward Pains they took to conceal their Satisfaction, that it was not unnoticed, and even ſurpriſed Mr. and Mrs. *Worthy*. But after Breakfaſt, as had been agreed between them, *Henrietta* withdrew, and the Colonel ſoon explained himſelf to her Parents. He in the moſt reſpectful Manner told them he could not think of the approaching Separation from Perſons for whom he had ſo real an Eſteem and Friendſhip, without the utmoſt Regret; that it had urged him to impart to them the ardent Affection he had for Miſs *Henrietta*; for to keep it in his Boſom would now be extreme Torment; nor ſhould he be able to ſupport Abſence from her without a Gleam of Hope; that they knew his Character, and he imagined it would be no Bar to his Pretenſions, as, though young, he never indulged himſelf in any criminal Exceſs, or gave a Fellow-Creature Pain; that his Fortune indeed was not conſiderable, an Eſtate of 600 *l. per Annum* left him by his Mother's Father, and his Commiſſion, being his All; but he had Expectations from the Grace of his Sovereign; and that a Couple determined

mined to make each other happy might perform their Duties in Life, bleſſed with Plenty, if Affluence and the Parade of Grandeur were not their Lot. He therefore beſought them to be propitious to his Suit, and to give him Leave to addreſs their charming Daughter, otherwiſe Deſpair and Miſery would enſue; ſince he ſhould never bring himſelf to counteract that undoubted Authority they had to diſpoſe of her as they thought moſt agreeable to the Maxims of Juſtice and Prudence.

Very fortunately for the Colonel, the worthy Perſons he addreſſed had expected this Declaration; they obſerved, perhaps more than they could themſelves, the growing Affection of the two Lovers; and the fair Character of the Colonel, the Nobility of his Family, and the invaluable Favour he had lately conferred upon them, made the Obſervation far from diſagreeable. One Objection they ſuffered for a long while to ſway them, but had overcome it; which was, the perſonal Character of the Colonel's Father and Brother, and the ſuppoſed Injury they had been guilty of to poor *Maria*; the latter of whom had never been mentioned to the Colonel ſince their Acquaintance. Thus prepared then, Mr. *Worthy*, taking the Colonel by the Hand, made him the following Anſwer.

"I am not inſenſible, Sir, of the Ho-
"nour you do us. With us your excel-
"lent Character, and a Behaviour that
"would

"would do Credit to advanced Years, weigh "down the Scale againſt any little Diſpa- "rity of Fortune, which I am able to "ſupply every Deficiency in. We ſeek for "Happineſs for our Daughter in Marriage, "and are convinced with you, that Riches "and Splendor alone cannot ſecure it, nay, "are often great Impediments. The ge- "neroufly hazarding your Life for her De- "liverance gives you a Claim to her Af- "fections that it were unjuſt to deny: "Therefore you have our Conſent to ad- "dreſs her; and I declare to you at the "ſame time, that I ſhall be proud of a "Union with your Virtues, am ſenſible "you are both peculiarly formed for each "other; and if the Addition of 30,000 *l.* "will contribute to your Felicity, it ſhall "be paid you on the Day of your Nuptials. "I have Reaſon to think *Henrietta* will not "be averſe to your Propoſals; and, as you "ſeem to dread Abſence from her, believe "me, your Company in *Berkſhire* will give "us the utmoſt Satisfaction."

An Anſwer ſo generous, ſo obliging in every Particular, met with due Returns. He kiſſed the Hand of the good Father, he kneeled to the amiable Mother, and proved by all his Words and Actions, how truly, how ſupremely bleſſed their Acquieſcence in his Suit had made him.

Henrietta was ſent for, who, conſcious of what had been upon the Carpet, entered trembling and bluſhing, when her Father, claſping

claſping her to his Boſom, ſaid jocoſely, "Here, *Henrietta*, I have given ear to a "Scheme by which we ſhall perhaps loſe "our delightful Companion: You muſt "prepare yourſelf for a cloſe Siege; and as "you have not provided yourſelf with a "competent Stock of Coquetry, I fear the "Fortreſs will ſoon ſurrender to this heroic "Commander, who has my Leave to break "Ground before it, and, for your Com-"fort, diſclaims all the concealed Advan-"ces of Sapping and Mining, but will "carry on his Works above Ground, and "in the Face of the Day. But to be ſe-"rious, *Henny*, though I think of loſing "you with that Regret a fond Parent muſt "feel when he is robbed of a dear and ex-"cellent Daughter, and though your Mam-"ma will feel that Loſs ſtill more ſeverely, "we eſteem, as we ought, your Happineſs "too much to oppoſe your Union with "this worthy Youth, if he ſhould be able "to move you in his Favour; and we need "not acquaint you, that his Merits and "your own ſeem to fit you peculiarly for "each other's Society, Friendſhip, and Af-"fection."

Henrietta, though much confuſed, had Preſence of Mind enough to return a proper Anſwer to theſe indulgent Parents; and thus pleaſed and happy, they ſet out all together for *Berkſhire*, the Colonel carrying his deſtined Spouſe in his own Chariot; ſo confident Mr. *Worthy* was that he was deſerving

ſerving of every Indulgence they could ſhew him.

At this beautiful Seat they were attended by a polite and agreeable Circle of their Neighbours; and as Mr. *Welldone*'s Houſe was not many Miles diſtant, they interchangeably viſited each other, and the Colonel had Opportunities enough to indulge that Affection which ſeemed to be incapable of Increaſe; but ſtill *Henrietta* often ſighed after poor *Maria*, whom ſhe remembered with abundant Tenderneſs, and, by what ſhe had lately ſuffered herſelf, painted the horrid Situation ſhe might be poſſibly reduced to. One fine Evening ſhe had ſauntered from the reſt of the Company to a verdant Bank at the End of one of the Alleys of the Garden, full of theſe mournful Reflections, and had taken that unhappy Maid's Letter from her Pocket, where ſhe had worn it ever ſince her Departure, and began to read it, when *Beaumont* ſurpriſed her in that melancholy Attitude, the Tears ſtreaming down her Cheeks. "Ah!" he exclaimed, "what "do I ſee!—what can thus diſturb my "*Henrietta?* Has any Ill happened to my "Charmer, or does ſhe weep for the Woes "of a Friend?—Tell me, my dear Crea"ture, that I may fly to relieve them, and "reſtore thy Mind to its wonted Tranqui"lity!"—He ſat down beſide her, and preſſing her to his Boſom, took the Letter from her, which had cauſed her ſo many Tears; and when he had read it, begged her to explain

plain the Myſtery to him, and tell him who the Writer was, as he was a perfect Stranger to the Hand-Writing, and the Incidents therein mentioned. "Alas! my *Beaumont*," ſhe returned, "I fear the Reſtoration to me "of my Friend will baffle all your Generoſi-"ty: She was moſt cruelly loſt to us, as "the Villain from whom you relieved me "hinted to you in his expiring Moments. "I had ſome Reaſon not to acquaint you "with her Story before, as it might carry "ſome Reflection in it on Perſons that "ought to be dear to you. But now I will "relate the Adventure which brought *Ma-*"*ria* to my Acquaintance, and of whom "I ſhall ever mourn the Loſs. Oh! Sir, "had you but ſeen her, you would confeſs "I have Cauſe to weep. She was all gen-"tle, good and kind; her Mind was "fraught with every Excellence, and was "in ſuch Uniſon with my own, as to con-"ſtitute one Soul, as it were, between us: "Often ſhe would have related her Adven-"tures before ſhe came to our Houſe, but "as often ſome unexpected Accident pre-"vented her." *Henrietta* then informed *Beaumont* of every Circumſtance relating to *Maria*; her Father's firſt meeting with her, her Mother's Jealouſy, the Earl of *Beau-mont*'s Viſit to her Father, the Treachery of *Sally Price*; in conſequence, her generous Elopement; the Information received from Mrs. *Couſens*; and, finally, what *Sally* had hinted about his Brother, Lord *Belvidere*.

Whilſt

Whilſt theſe Matters were relating to him, *Beaumont* expreſſed much Aſtoniſhment, much Compaſſion of *Maria*, and many Encomiums upon the Generoſity of the worthy Family; but, when his Father and Brother were mentioned, he appeared to have loſt himſelf in Thought; he turned pale, and then reddened; he got up, and then ſat down, as if in the utmoſt Uneaſineſs; and, when his lovely Fair concluded her Narration, by enquiring if he had ever ſeen or remembered *Maria* at his Father's, if he knew the Reaſon of the ill Treatment ſhe had met with, and other Queſtions that naturally aroſe in her Mind, he gazed on her with Abundance of Tenderneſs, ſeemed collecting his ſcattered Ideas, and, after a long Pauſe of Silence, made the following Reply.

"Oh! my *Henrietta*, you have touched "me to the Quick indeed; you have re- "called Perſons and Things to my Mind "that I could wiſh to think of no more, "unleſs I could think of them more fa- "vourably than I do. But, dear as you "are to my Soul, why ſhould I hide any "thing from you, or think I can ſuffer in "your Opinion for the Guilt or the Follies "of others?

"The Earl of *Beaumont* had by his late "Lady two Sons, of whom I was the "youngeſt. My Mother was the Daugh- "ter of a worthy Gentleman of a ſmall

"Eſtate,

" Eſtate, (the ſame I now poſſeſs by his
" Will) whoſe Beauty, Virtue, and nu-
" merous Accompliſhments, were the beſt
" Part of her Portion. My Father, ſmit-
" ten by her Charms, married her whilſt a
" Commoner, and when there were ſeveral
" Lives between him and the Title he now
" bears; and for many Years they lived in
" uninterrupted Harmony. Oh! my *Hen-*
" *rietta*, had ſhe lived till this Time, what
" Delight her Converſation would have
" given you! Alas! as ſhe reſembled you
" in Perſon, ſo the Reſemblance of your
" Minds is more ſtriking to me. Her con-
" jugal and maternal Excellencies could be
" exceeded by nothing but her Piety and
" Veneration for her Creator, her Huma-
" nity and Benevolence to her Fellow-
" Creatures, which governed every Action
" of her Life.

" My Father, when he came to the
" *Beaumont* Eſtate and Title, ſoon diſcover-
" ed his natural Diſpoſition, which only
" Want of Means to exert had kept ſo long
" concealed: But he is my Parent! and
" I ſhall touch very lightly, and with due
" Reverence to him, upon his Foibles.
" He was libidinous and extravagant; but
" the Merit of my Mother for a long Time
" had Power over him to reſtrain thoſe
" Vices which a miſtaken Education had
" too ſtrongly rooted in his Heart. But
" *Pope*'s Picture of an unhappy Peereſs

" might

" might with equal Juſtice have ſoon after
" been applied to her:

She ſigh'd, and was no Counteſs *at her Heart.*

" Though all the Parade and Paraphernalia of her Station were allowed her, " nay, forced upon her, in Profuſion; yet " the many Inſults and Mortifications ſhe " received from a Man who was reſolved to let her know he was now Maſter, " ſoon broke her Health and her Spirits; " and what more than any thing elſe contributed to it, was the Proſpect that my " Brother, fired and actuated by all the " Pride and Inſolence of Nobility and " Wealth, was treading in his Father's " Steps, and that every Day ſhe muſt hear " of his Debaucheries. Thanks be to " Heaven, my Inclinations were quite different, as was my Education. I had " been brought up by my Grandfather, " who took care to inſtil into my Mind " ſuch Principles of Religion, ſuch Maxims of Honour and Prudence, and to " enure me to ſuch an early Habit of Sobriety and Temperance, that no future " Attempts could overcome. I was taught " to eſteem Wiſdom the trueſt Riches, and " to prize ſolid and real Happineſs before " all the Pomp and Splendour of the World, " too often, alas! attended with Satiety, " Diſguſt, and Miſery. He had Maſters " to teach me the Languages, and the Rudiments of the Sciences, in his own Houſe;

" his

" his extreme Tenderneſs and Affection to
" me makes me regret his Loſs to this very
" Day, and his Memory will ever be ſacred
" and dear to me. Upon my Father's
" coming to his Title and Eſtate, I was
" in a manner forced from this Abode of
" Wiſdom and Peace, and, agreeably to
" his Notions of Life, at once immerſed in
" Pleaſure, Diſſipation and Folly: But I
" was never more happy than when I could
" fly from theſe enſnaring Baits, to my Mo-
" ther's Preſence and Society, or to her
" Father's; and indeed I became their only
" Conſolation. My Father ran into vaſt
" Expences every Way; he built, he
" gamed; and as my Brother, who preſer-
" ved as little Reſpect for his Mother, being
" deaf to her Remonſtrances and Reproofs,
" acted as extravagantly as his Father, the
" Eſtate in a few Years became ſubject to
" ſuch Incumbrances as much leſſened the
" Means of purſuing their darling Pleaſures
" with any Degree of Satisfaction. My
" Mother's Repreſentations to retrench his
" Expences, and to retire into the Coun-
" try for that Purpoſe, were treated with
" Contempt; and as his Lordſhip, amongſt
" other imprudent Steps, had involved
" himſelf into Difficulties ariſing from his
" unlawful Amours, he now ſeldom en-
" tered her Apartments but to mortify and
" abuſe her. During this Time I had been
" ſent to *Oxford*, and was perfecting my
" Studies with great Avidity, when my
" dear

" dear Mother wrote me Word her Health
" was much injured, her Life precarious,
" and that ſhe had obtained Leave for me
" to quit the Univerſity, and to ſtay with
" her till better Health, or her Departure
" out of a World of Trouble, ſhould free
" me from my Attendance upon her. I
" hurried up to *London* upon the Receipt of
" this mournful Epiſtle, and found her bad
" indeed. She ſurvived but a Fortnight
" after my Arrival, and died in my Arms,
" bleſſing me, and exhorting me to main-
" tain the Principles of Honour and Virtue,
" that had been inſtilled into my Mind, in
" the future Courſe of my Life. Forgive
" theſe Tears, my *Henrietta*; they are but
" a poor Tribute paid to the Memory of
" the beſt of Women, and of Mothers,
" whoſe Fate in Life was moſt deplorable.

" After her Deceaſe, and a modiſh Pe-
" riod of outward Sorrow, my Father and
" Brother returned to their uſual Courſe of
" Life, which ſoon diſguſted me, and
" would have determined me to quit the
" Family, if the War then kindled had
" not excited me to follow the Bent of my
" Genius, by entering into the Army, and
" if the Treatment I met with, and the
" ſcanty Allowance that was made for my
" Support, had not been ſufficient Motives
" to that Removal. My Propoſal of going
" abroad met with no Oppoſition; I was
" preſented with a Lieutenant's Commiſ-
" ſion in an old Regiment, which I ſoon

" after

" after joined, and behaved ſo much to the
" Satisfaction of my Superiors, as ſhortly
" to be raiſed to the Rank of Lieutenant-
" Colonel, which I now poſſeſs, and, upon
" my being ſoon after diſpatched to *England*,
" with the News of a conſiderable Advan-
" tage obtained over the Enemy, was re-
" moved to the firſt Regiment of Guards,
" wherein I have the Honour to command
" a Company. My worthy Grandfather
" died ſoon after my Arrival, and bequeath-
" ed me his Eſtate, and near 6000 *l.* in
" the Funds. Mean-time my Father and
" Brother, though they had, by conforming
" to the Meaſures of the Adminiſtration
" implicitly, obtained lucrative Places at
" Court, were reduced to many mean Shifts,
" to ſupport their Dignity; and now,
" though I had been ſcarce thought of or
" mentioned by either for ſome time, I was
" applied to for the Loan of my 6000 *l.* I
" heſitated not a Moment to comply with
" the Deſire of one, who, however he
" acted, was ſtill my Father; and ſold out,
" though Stocks were then much under
" Par, to oblige him. I need not inform
" you, that, not ſtickling for a proper Se-
" curity, it ſtill remains unpaid; and a pru-
" dent Refuſal from me, of raiſing a large
" Sum upon the Mortgage of my little
" Eſtate, ſo irritated my Father and Bro-
" ther, that I was even forbid the Houſe,
" and it is now full four Years ſince
" we have had the leaſt Correſpondence;

" though

" though, on my Side, no Advances have
" been ſpared towards a Reconciliation.
" Finding, however, this to be impracti-
" cable, unleſs I ſtripped myſelf of every
" thing I poſſeſſed, I forbore to enquire
" after them and their Affairs, and, if
" we met in public, I ſeldom received fur-
" ther Notice from them than was due to
" a Stranger. But to the Point: About
" a Year and a Half ſince, I was informed,
" a young Lady had been taken into
" the Earl's Houſe, but that no one knew
" from whence ſhe came, or who ſhe was.
" As he paid her every Diſtinction due to
" a Daughter, I myſelf and every one elſe
" thought her to be the Fruit of one of
" his unlawful Intrigues. I only know,
" that ſhe was called *Maria*, and heard
" (for I never ſaw her) that ſhe was remark-
" ably handſome; and that, being ſuſpected
" of ſome Sort of Affection for Lord *Belvi-*
" *dere*, my Father had ſent her away to a
" diſtant Place. What *Caſwall* ſaid before
" he expired, made me think her the young
" Lady you lamented; but I never once
" aimed at any Explanation, fearful I
" ſhould be forced to ſay Things of ſo near
" a Relation, as would be diſagreeable and
" unbecoming. But I have now opened
" all the Secrets of my Family to my *Hen-*
" *rietta*, and I hope, from her candid Tem-
" per, the Crimes of others will not ope-
" rate with her in my Diſfavour. Did I
" know where this lamented Maid was con-

" cealed,

"cealed, as well on her own Account, "(as you have given me ſo extraordinary a "Character of her) as to gratify and dry "up the Tears of my *Henrietta*, I would "deliver her at the Hazard of my Life: But "if ſhe is in my Brother's Cuſtody, I fear "ſhe will with great Difficulty eſcape the "Effects of his brutal and libertine Tem-"per; and he is ſo artful in his Schemes, "and ſo fertile in Expedients to gratify his "Paſſions, that I much fear, ere now, her "Situation muſt have been terrible."

Henrietta, in the moſt obliging Manner, thanked *Beaumont* for his mortifying Relation, and obſerved, that the Follies of others ſhould in no Reſpect leſſen the Characters of their virtuous Relations; and that, for her Part, ſhe had ſuch Confidence in his Honour and his Affection, that ſhe ſhould not heſitate a Moment in giving him her Hand whenever he thought proper to demand it.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Maria's further Removal.---A Viſit to her.---Reduced to a ſad Situation indeed.---Whence it proceeds.---Has ſome Hope of Deliverance.

WE left poor *Maria* endeavouring to bury, in the Arms of Sleep, the Fatigues ſhe had underwent, and the Conflicts her Mind had endured, on the Night of her (ſo generouſly, but fatally) abſenting herſelf from Mr. *Worthy*'s: But, though ſo weary, and ſo jaded, it was long before that kind Solacer ſhed his wiſhed Influence on her Eye-Lids, and compoſed her to Reſt.

The Morning hardly dawned before ſhe left her Bed, and, having put on ſome clean Linen which ſhe had brought with her in a Bundle, which contained her only, and a very ſcanty Wardrobe, ſhe eſſayed to open the Chamber-Door, with an Intent to go into the Garden, if there was one, or to take a Turn in the Field before the Houſe, as ſhe perceived it to be, from her Window; but, to her Surpriſe, found ſhe had been locked in, and that the Key had been taken out on the other Side. This unexpected Confinement gave Occaſion to many foreboding Thoughts: She revolved in her Mind the myſterious Manner in which ſhe was conducted to this Houſe, the Diſap-

pearing of her Conductor; nor did the Whiſper between him and the Coachman in the Inn-Yard eſcape her Animadverſion; and, however improbable, it froze the very Blood in her Veins when ſhe reflected ſhe might have been betrayed into the very Hands ſhe dreaded moſt. However, this was ſo very little poſſible, ſhe again thought, as *Sally Price* was ſo worthy a Creature, and the Farmer and his Wife, her Couſins, ſeemed to have behaved with ſo much Kindneſs, that her Mind became more calm, and ſhe would fain have looked upon her being thus made a Priſoner as an Effect of her Hoſteſs's great Care of her. She opened the Caſement to take a Survey of the Avenue to the Houſe, as ſhe conceived her Chamber was in the fore Part of it, which ſhe found it was. She could diſcover nothing but a wide Extent of Champaign Country before her, with a dirty Lane, up which ſhe ſuppoſed the Coach had been driven that brought her. She perceived, on this Side, no other Houſe within her View. A Cow-houſe, and three or four Barns, were Part of the Premiſes, and a large Maſtiff was parading under her Window, barking and growling as he paſſed to and fro', which was increaſed by the Noiſe ſhe made in opening the Caſement. All this tended to remove her Suſpicion entirely: She ſaw it was a Farm-Houſe, and that ſingle Circumſtance baniſhed her Fears. However, the Prayers ſhe as uſual offered up to the Supreme Being,

ing, were now accompanied with ſome Tears, whilſt, conſidering herſelf as diſtant from any Friend, forlorn, and in the Hands of Strangers, ſhe moſt earneſtly and ſincerely petitioned for his merciful Protection. Soon after the Performance of this holy Exerciſe, as ſhe had again turned her tearful Eyes towards the Window, ſhe heard ſome indiſtinct Sounds in a neighbouring Room, as ſhe ſuppoſed; and Curioſity impelled her to liſten attentively, as ſhe thought one Voice ſeemed inſpired with Anger, and that a Sound like that of her own Name proceeded from it: But ſhe could hear nothing diſtinctly, owing to the Thickneſs of the Wall, and the continual Clamour of the aforeſaid Maſtiff.

The very Imagination of her Name being repeated with an elevated Tone of Voice, in her alarming Situation, put her into a cold Sweat, as ſhe walked up and down the Chamber. At one Time ſhe wiſhed to ſee the good Woman of the Houſe again, and to be eaſed of her Doubts, and then again dreaded the Opening of the Door, in Fear of a Conviction that ſhe was betrayed and unhappy. Often ſhe looked on her *Henrietta*'s Reſemblance; as often ſhe deplored her Abſence from her kind protecting Embraces, whilſt Floods of Tears flowed from her charming Eyes, and Sighs involuntarily heaved her foreboding Breaſt.

Three Hours and more were ſpent in this melancholy Manner by the forlorn Fair-

one, when at length ſhe heard her Door opened, and was ſaluted by her Landlady, who expreſſed her Surpriſe at her early Riſing, and her Fear that ſhe had enjoyed but little Repoſe in a ſtrange Houſe and Bed: To all which *Maria* returned her moſt polite and engaging Anſwers.

She was deſired to walk down into the Parlour to Breakfaſt, where ſhe found both Coffee and Tea made ready for her, and was ſo hoſpitably treated by the Woman, as to baniſh all Dread from her Mind, and to encourage her to make Enquiry if her Huſband was yet returned. She was anſwered in the Affirmative, and told, that, being greatly fatigued, he could hardly be able to get up before Noon.

Soon after, a Man, ſeemingly dirty and tired, alighted from his Horſe, and familiarly bouncing into the Room, was going reſpectfully to retreat at Sight of *Maria*, when the Woman cried, "Don't be frighted, Mr. *Miles*; come in.—What haſty Buſineſs has brought you this Way ſo early?"—"Why," he replied, "I am upon a Buſineſs of Lady *Aimwell*'s:—She has juſt turned her Chamber-Maid off, for ſome d—n'd Thing or other; and I am going to Town to deſire her Siſter to lay out for one in her Room. I don't know what's become to theſe young Flirts: She can never be ſo happy elſewhere; has lived five Years with my Lady, and has offended her at laſt.

"She's

"She's a woundy good Woman, and I "know gave her 8 *l.* a-Year, and her Vails "came to as much more."—"There's "not a better Miſtreſs in the World," replied the Woman; "a little paſſionate, "or ſo; but it's ſoon over, and then no-"thing's too hot, or too heavy, to make "them amends: But I thought Mrs. *Cicely* "would not be very long-lived there; you "know ſhe was courted by Farmer *Cutts*'s "Son; and when the Wenches get Ma-"trimony into their Heads, they are good "for nothing."

Maria heard all this with great Attention, and began to think that Providence had thrown the Intelligence in her Way for her Relief. She modeſtly aſked how far off the Lady lived, and wiſhed ſhe could be recommended to her. "Oh! Gemini! "Madam," the Woman cried, "was ever "a more lucky Thought!—You'll be ex-"tremely happy with her—and ſhe has "ſuch an Opinion of me, that my Charac-"ter will be readily taken. It is about "ten Miles off; and if Mr. *Miles* will de-"fer his Journey till To-morrow, this "Afternoon I'll borrow a Chaiſe to carry "you over. How happy ſhould I be to "ſee you in ſo good a Family!"—"With "all my Heart," returned the Man.—"I know my Lady wants a Maid as ſoon "as poſſible, and the young Woman ſeems "to be very good tempered, and I know "your Recommendation will be ſufficient."

"Lack-a-day! Mr. *Miles*, I have known "the Gentlewoman but a little while; but "ſhe is ſo well characſtered from a Rela- "tion, that I'll be bound ſhe'll do. So "you had as good eat a Bit of Breakfaſt, "and return and tell my Lady ſhe ſhall "be over with her in the Afternoon, about "Four or Five o'Clock; and, as it will "be too late for her to return here To- "night, if ſhe is not approved of, be ſo "good to let her lie at your Houſe all "Night, and ſhe can return without fa- "tiguing herſelf in the Morning: But, as I "am ſure ſhe will be liked, ſhe ſhall bring "ſome Linen and other Things with her; "it is only bringing them back with her, if "ſhe returns." All this was agreed to; and after he had eat a Bit or two of Toaſt, and drank a Cup of Ale, he ſet off again, ſeemingly in high Glee at the Tidings he carried.

Maria was quite delighted with the Proſpect ſhe had of ſettling in a good Family, inſtead of living where ſhe was, and conſuming the ſmall Pittance of Money ſhe had; nor could ſhe conceive any Proſpect of procuring Needle-Work, or hearing of a Place, whilſt ſhe reſided in a Houſe ſo remote from any Town, as ſhe ſuppoſed it was. One Thing, indeed, gave her ſome Diſturbance: The few Clothes, and little Linen ſhe had, were much ſuperior to the Condition of a Servant; but, as the Time was ſo ſhort, no other Habiliments could be

be procured; and this Difficulty much perplexed her, till imparting it to her Confidante, ſhe told her, the Lady would imagine theſe Things had been given her by her laſt Miſtreſs, and that, be it as it would, gay Clothes would be a Recommendation to the Lady, rather than the contrary; and when ſhe was fixed in her Place, as it was near *Uxbridge*, ſhe would have Opportunities enough of purchaſing at that Town whatever ſhe ſtood in need of. *Maria*'s Ignorance of the Situations of *Deptford* and *Uxbridge* prevented her remarking the Forgetfulneſs her Hoſteſs was here guilty of; though ſhe, immediately recollecting her Miſtake, appeared very much confuſed and diſconcerted; but ſoon recovering, ſhe went out, as ſhe pretended, to ſend a Meſſenger to order the Chaiſe to be ready at about Twelve or One o'Clock, and then rejoined her Companion, who thought every Minute an Hour till ſhe ſet out for Lady *Aimwell*'s.

At the appointed Time a four-wheel Chaiſe came up the Lane, and *Maria*, after having taken a Bit of Dinner, took a polite Leave of her Landlady, who had ſcrawled out a Letter to the Lady, as ſhe ſaid, giving her a great Character, and put it into her Hand as ſhe mounted, with many earneſt Deſires to the Man who drove, to take the utmoſt Care of his Charge, and not to return again without her, till he heard from her that ſhe continued where ſhe was going. *Maria* offered to pay her for her ſhort Reſidence, but

could not perſuade her to accept any thing, and her Eyes even ſeemed moiſtening with Tears at her Departure. The Driver put on at a pretty great Rate as ſoon as he came into the great Road; and then *Maria* aſked him if he knew Mr. *Miles*, and his Way perfectly to the Lady's Seat? to which he very civilly anſwered, Yes. At this Pace he drove the Chaiſe for near two Hours, when *Maria* could not help thinking ſhe was near the Place of her Deſtination, and queſtioned him about it: To which he anſwered, That the direct Road being too bad for a Chaiſe to run in, he had taken a Circuit, to prevent her being expoſed to any Danger, and he feared he ſhould be two Hours more before he reached the End of their Journey. During this Time he had left *Uxbridge* to the Left, and was now got as far as *Iver-Heath*, the Wildneſs of which Proſpect a little contributed to diſconcert her, as well as the Obſervation that a Horſeman had followed the Chaiſe, and ſometimes rode paſt it, ever ſince its firſt Setting-out. This Circumſtance ſhe alſo mentioned to the Driver, who anſwered, that he knew nothing of him, and believed, by his odd Way of acting, he was drunk.

The Chaiſe ſtill continuing to be driven with great Rapidity, and ſeveral other Queſtions meeting with little or no Anſwer, *Maria* began again to be alarmed, when ſhe bethought herſelf of looking at her Recommendation to Lady *Aimwell*; but with what Grief

Grief and Aſtoniſhment ſhe read the Paper her Hoſteſs had put into her Hand, and which, reformed from its bad *Engliſh* and worſe Spelling, was as follows, may be eaſily gueſſed by the ſympathetic Reader.

MADAM,

MY Heart bleeds for you. I am forced to act as I do; but I pity you, and am your Friend in writing you this. Lord pardon me! you are going to no ſuch Place. It is all an Artifice of my Lord *Belvidere*. We are his Tenants, and have ſome great Obligations to, and Fear of him, or I would not for the World act as I do. Pray, Madam, tear this as ſoon as you have read it, or I ſhall be ruined. I can't tell you more. By all Means get an Opportunity to make your Eſcape.

Your ſincere Well-wiſher,
MARY GRIFFITHS.

It is a juſt Obſervation, that Uncertainty doubles Affliction; and when we know the worſt of our Situation, we are more able to ſupport it. So it fared with *Maria*; ſhe now ſaw all the Malice of her Fortune; but the Tears that ſilently trickled down her Cheeks relieved her from that oppreſſive Weight of Sorrow to which ſhe would elſe have become a Sacrifice, and finiſhed all her Troubles on the Spot. She deteſted nobody ſo much as Lord *Belvidere*; and her

Horror to be in the Cuſtody of a Man who had no Honour, no Virtue, no Principles of Religion, but whoſe wild Paſſions were his ſole Directors, ſhocked her extremely. Her firſt Reflection was, "How can this be "true? Can Mrs. *Price* have betrayed "me?" And when ſhe recollected, that her being demanded by the Earl was known to the Family, that *Price* was the Perſon whoſe Intelligence had induced her to fly from Mr. *Worthy*'s, and the myſterious Method of her Conveyance to *Griffiths*'s, ſhe no longer doubted of her being betrayed to the lawleſs young Nobleman.

In the Confuſion of her Ideas, ſhe was at firſt going to betray her Intelligence to the Driver; but conſidering that ſuch Sort of Perſons have little Feeling, and that they give themſeves up implicitly to their Superiors for Reward, and ſtill perceived the Horſeman at ſome Diſtance from the Chaiſe, who ſhe now had a Certainty was an Accomplice, ſhe altered her Mind; and having torn the Letter, and ſcattered the Pieces, unperceived, in the Road, began to ruminate Abundance of Projects to eſcape the Danger ſhe was in. None of them, however, appeared feaſible, but the Alarming, by her Cries, the next inhabited Place ſhe paſſed through, and flinging herſelf upon the Pity and Compaſſion of the Inhabitants, which ſhe thought her Condition muſt excite. This Thought pleaſed her highly; and

and as the worſt that could betide her was Death, which ſhe reſolved to prefer to Violation, ſhe ſurpriſingly calmed her Spirits, and armed herſelf with that Fortitude and Reſolution of which ſhe was ſoon indeed to ſtand in great Need. A thouſand and a thouſand times ſhe blamed her own Credulity and Raſhneſs, for being induced to leave Mr. *Worthy*'s; and, laſt of all, ſhe lifted up her Heart and her Hands to the Almighty, and in pious Breathings implored his Protection and Deliverance from her Enemies.

She had unfortunately no Opportunity of putting her Scheme into Execution; for the reſt of their Journey was through Bye-Roads, and over Commons, where only a ſtraggling Cottage, a few Women and barefooted Children, were to be ſeen. Vexed at this ſore Diſappointment, ſhe had Occaſion for all her Firmneſs to prevent her ſinking under it; and at length, once more offering up fervent Prayers, ſhe determined to diſſemble her Knowledge of whoſe Hands ſhe was in, and to take every Opportunity (by lulling all Suſpicion aſleep) that preſented itſelf for Eſcape. Nor did it appear impoſſible to her to corrupt, with the little Money ſhe had, ſome one or other of the leſs determined Agents in her Captivity.

It was now near Six o'Clock, when the Chaiſe ſtopped in a ſmall Hamlet, which conſiſted of four ſtraggling Houſes of ſome conſiderable Magnitude, interſperſed with three or four Cottages, all lying upon the Side

Side of a Common which they had lately paſſed; when the Driver addreſſed himſelf to her, and told her, as the Day was ſo far ſpent, he had ſtopped at Mr. *Miles*'s, which was about a Mile from Lady *Aimwell*'s, that ſhe might refreſh herſelf for that Night, after ſo tedious a Journey, and he would be ready in the Morning to carry her back again, if ſhe did not ſtay with her Ladyſhip. By this Time the counterfeit Mr. *Miles* was ready to welcome her, and hand her out of the Chaiſe. She alighted then, without betraying the Grief that oppreſſed her; and after giving her Driver a ſmall Preſent, followed *Miles* into the Houſe, of the Avenues to which ſhe took as particular a Survey as the ſhort Space they were in walking up to it would allow. She was conducted into the beſt Room in the Houſe, which was a decent one; and then Mrs. *Miles*, as *Maria* ſuppoſed her to be, with many coarſe Compliments welcomed her Arrival. The very Sight of this Woman added to her Terror; ſhe was fat and ſhort; and Nature had given her ſuch a forbidding Voice, and ſo diſagreeable a Countenance, as were preſumptive Proofs that little Humanity was to be expected from her: But upon her withdrawing, *Maria* was ſomewhat revived with the Appearance of a handſome young Woman, whoſe Perſon diſplayed ſuch Perfections as raiſed her Admiration, and who, in a Manner more polite and engaging than her Condition promiſed,

miſed, hoped ſhe would permit her to bear her Company that Evening, as her Mother was too much engaged to participate of that Pleaſure. The winning Graces of this young Laſs had an admirable Effect upon *Maria*. So much Senſibility appeared in her Looks, ſhe ſurveyed that unfortunate Creature with ſo much ſeeming Reſpect, that ſhe began to throw off her Embarraſſment, and aſked her many Queſtions regarding the Place, the Family, and Lady *Aimwell*, thinking it not improper ſtill to ſhew her Belief, that ſhe was on the Morrow to wait upon that Lady.

The young Woman, who let her know her Name was *Lucy*, anſwered her as to the firſt, That the Family conſiſted of her Father, Mother, herſelf and a Brother, a Maid and two Men Servants; but her Anſwers in regard to Lady *Aimwell* were accompanied with ſuch Confuſion, as convinced *Maria* ſhe ſhould find no great Difficulty in intereſting her in her Favour, and that ſhe certainly knew her Condition, and pitied it. She gently, and in her uſual engaging Manner, ſaid, "Mrs. *Lucy*, you "afford me great Pleaſure by your Com- "pany, and I am not without Hope of a "longer Continuance of it, by becoming "your Bed-Fellow for this Night."— "Oh! no, Madam," *Lucy* returned, "an- "other Apartment is providing for you, "that is more ſuitable for you than mine;" and bluſhed extremely, which ſtill ſerved to con-

convince *Maria* ſhe knew more of her Affairs than ſhe cared to utter. Summoning up then all her attractive Graces, ſhe began, in Accents that would have moved the moſt brutal Heart, to give *Lucy* an Account, in brief, of ſome late Particulars that had occurred to her, which ſhe related in ſo undeſigning and artleſs a Manner, that *Lucy*, though ſhe perceived not her Drift, expreſſed her Pity and Aſtoniſhment; particularly when ſhe related the Motives of her leaving Mr. *Worthy*'s, and of ſeeking to ſupport herſelf by entering as a Servant into ſome reputable Family. The Girl was all Ears and Eyes during the whole Time, the Tear ſtarting, and the ſympathetic Sigh heaving her Boſom; and when ſhe had finiſhed what ſhe thought proper to ſay, (her principal Inducement to which was to engage *Lucy*'s Confidence, and to undeceive her if ſhe had heard a different Account of her, which ſhe made no Doubt was the Caſe) the lovely Ruſtic, lifting up her Hands, exclaimed, "Good God! what a many Misfortunes "you have met with! More never," ſure, "fell to any young Woman's Lot before! "---I wiſh you may feel no more Affliction.---But"---Here ſhe was interrupted by her Mother's coming in, who churliſhly ſaid, "What are you chattering about?--- "This Girl's Tongue will tire you, I am "afraid."---"No, by no means, Mrs. *Miles*; "your Daughter is a moſt agreeable Companion; I am perfectly charmed with her,

"and

" and beg you would not deprive me of her " Society."---" Nay, as for that, though " I ſay it, the Wench has had good Breed- " ing, and knows herſelf; and, if you " pleaſe, ſhe ſhall ſtay Supper with you, " ſince you ſeem to like her ſo well." Such an Anſwer from the four-faced Squab, as it was little expected, gave *Maria* much Satisfaction, which ſhe diſplayed by the moſt genteel Acknowledgements, and, whilſt ſhe was in the Room, talked of indifferent Matters, of the Weather, her Journey, the apparent Pleaſantneſs of the Hamlet, and the Charms of a Country Life: But, as ſoon as ſhe was withdrawn, ſhe endeavoured to finiſh her Conqueſt over *Lucy*, and for that Purpoſe aſſumed an Air (and it was real) of great Trouble and Concern at her forlorn Condition; enlarged upon the ſad Reverſe of her Fortune, which ſhe hinted had lately been ſuperior to what it then appeared to be; and particularly dwelt upon the Vices of the other Sex, and the Arts they practiſed to ruin undeſigning, unſuſpecting Virtue and Innocence; expreſſing her Fear, as ſhe was now launching into a different Sphere of Life, of the Attempts that might be made upon her; and ſhed unfeigned Tears. *Lucy* was melted; ſhe wept with her; her Breaſt ſeemed oppreſſed with ſtruggling Paſſions; ſhe caſt her Eyes towards the Door, as if to notice if any one overhead them; and finding all Things agreeable to her Wiſhes, ſaid in a low Voice, " Alas! what you ſay, Miſs,

" has

" has raiſed ſtrange Doubts in my Mind.
" You have been repreſented as another-
" gueſs Sort of a Perſon: My Father and
" Mother believe you are a young married
" Lady, who have run away from your
" Spouſe: He was here Yeſterday with our
" Landlord, Sir *Thomas Jones*, and put my
" Father upon coming to the Place where
" you was. He is a fine young Gentleman
" indeed; but, good God! he muſt cer-
" tainly be a baſe Man. My Father's Name
" is *Holmes*, not *Miles*; that was a Name
" they made him aſſume. He ſaid you was,
" as I am informed, a very virtuous Lady,
" but had lately turned Methodiſt, and in a
" Fit of religious Madneſs had left your Fa-
" mily; that he wanted to reclaim you by
" gentle Means, and for that Reaſon con-
" trived to have you decoyed here in the
" Manner you was; and that from hence
" he would endeavour to carry you to ſome
" Sea-Port, and embark with you for
" *France*, where you would be at a Diſtance
" from the enthuſiaſtic Guides you follow-
" ed, and perhaps new Objects might
" awaken your Attention to the Things of
" this World. All this he ſpoke ſo ſincere-
" ly, (and I belive I have repeated it Word
" for Word) that my Father and Mother
" pitied his Caſe: Nor did they doubt the
" Truth of it, as Sir *Thomas* averred it was
" ſo; and he gave my Father a handſome
" Preſent for his Aſſiſtance. I hope, how-
" ever, we may contrive ſome Means for

" your

" your Safety: Nor do I think, if my " Mother knew your Caſe, that ſhe would " aid in any Attempt againſt you. Sir *Thomas*'s is about three Miles from hence, " where the Gentleman is at preſent, I ſuppoſe, till, under Pretence of your going " to Lady *Aimwell*'s, you are removed to a " greater Diſtance from *London*."

Maria heard theſe ſtrange Anecdotes with ſuch a Mixture of Grief and Terror, that ſhe could not contain herſelf: She burſt into Tears, trembled from Head to Foot, and exclaimed, " Gracious Heaven!--- " what have I done to deſerve theſe Perſecutions! Can the Innocence of my Life, " and the Purity of my Heart, draw down " ſuch a Load of Calamities upon my Head! " ---But, ah! why do I arraign thy Juſtice, " and doubt of thy Mercy!---Wicked Men " may triumph for a Time; but thou art " the Protector of the Virtuous, and, when " every Human Aid ſeems to have failed me, " on thy good Providence I rely for my " Deliverance! Sooner, oh! ſooner, would " I be expoſed to the Mercy of Lions and " Tygers in an *African* Wilderneſs, than " to the Villainies of this abandoned Man! " ---Ah! there I ſhould meet with Death; " but here, what has the unfortunate *Maria* to expect!---Oh! the very Thought " harrows up my Boſom.---Dear *Lucy*, thou " tenderly-compaſſionate Maid, who can'ſt " thus ſympathiſe with the Misfortunes of " others, oh! help me to eſcape this vile

" Youth,

" Youth, this degenerate Nobleman, who,
" not content by his Artifices to turn me
" out a Wanderer, has contrived a horrid
" Project; no doubt, to violate my Honour,
" and perhaps to take away my Life.---
" Oh! if ever you expect Favour from the
" Almighty, afford your Aſſiſtance to the
" moſt wretched Virgin that ever, ſure,
" exiſted. What I have related of myſelf
" is really the Truth; and the Tale he has
" told your Parents is a vile, a notorious
" Falſehood, calculated for no other Pur-
" poſe than to impoſe upon them and ruin
" me. I was informed by a Letter from the
" Perſon to whoſe Houſe I was firſt carried,
" and which ſhe put into my Hand at part-
" ing, how and by whom I had been de-
" ceived; and, had I paſſed, after I read it,
" through any inhabited Place, determined
" to free myſelf from Confinement, if poſ-
" ſible, by proclaiming the Force that I
" was under, and all its attendant Circum-
" ſtances; but no ſuch Opportunity, alas!
" offered itſelf, and nothing now gives me
" the leaſt Hope or Comfort, but the Con-
" templation of that Goodneſs of Heart you
" poſſeſs. Oh! *Lucy*, if I was his Wife,
" if he had the leaſt Claim to Authority
" over me, do you think there could be
" the leaſt Reaſon for all theſe Machina-
" nations and Contrivances by which I have
" been hurried from Place to Place? No,
" *Lucy*, the Fact ſpeaks for itſelf. He has
" formerly profeſſed himſelf my Lover, which

" was

" was the Source of all the Unhappineſs I " lately experienced; but I rejected his " Offers, as well becauſe I ſuppoſed my " near Relation to him forbid ſuch an " Union, as that neither his Perſon, Under- " ſtanding, or Manners, were agreeable to " me. This, my dear *Lucy*, be ſatisfied, " is the Truth. My Soul could never, " even where my own Intereſt or Safety was " concerned, permit me to tell a Falſehood; " and, depend upon it, the Iſſue will prove it. " Alas! why did I leave my dear *Henrietta!* " Under the Protection of her Father's hoſ- " pitable Roof, bleſſed in her Society, I had " eſcaped theſe moſt dreadful Evils, which " now ſo grievouſly oppreſs me:—But let " not my Memory trace back the Happineſs " I have loſt, and loſt, Heaven knows, from " generous and grateful Motives; but con- " ſider of my preſent Situation, and the " Means of Deliverance from it."

Lucy heard her with a fixed Attention, and accompanied her Tears with her own, and, after ſhe had ended her Addreſs, continued ſome Time ſilent, revolving what had been ſo earneſtly deſired of her. She was going to reply, when Supper was brought in by one of the Servants, and ſoon after, the Farmer and his Wife entered, which obliged them to compoſe themſelves, and put on a chearful Air.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Characters of a Country Family.---Maria *in great Danger.*---*How relieved.*---*Finds an Aſylum at Parſon* Burnet's.----*Meets an old Friend.*

MR. *Holmes* and his Wife behaved very reſpectfully to their Gueſt, who did and ſaid every thing ſhe thought was agreeable, during this Repaſt, to conciliate their Eſteem, and to engage their Friendſhip: Nor was it without its Effect; the Woman, belying her forbidding Face, grew very fond of her, and *Holmes* ſeemed peculiarly pleaſed at the Encomiums ſhe beſtowed on his Daughter, not being without ſome Hopes that ſhe would take a Fancy to her, and retain her in her Service; for, though he ſtill kept up the Farce of Lady *Aimwell*, he thoroughly believed the Story he had heard from Lord *Belvidere*, and pitying her extravagant Elopement from her Huſband, doubted not but ſhe would ſoon be reſtored to her Senſes and her Family. After Supper they retired, and left the unfortunate Maid and her Companion together; when *Lucy* thanked her for the good Opinion ſhe had conceived of her, and hoped ſhe ſhould be able to deſerve it. This was all ſhe could at this Time ſay; for, ſoon after, the whole Family came into the Room to ſit there,

there, till the Hour of retiring to Reſt. The Son was about twenty-ſeven Years of Age, and ſomewhat like his Siſter in Perſon; though clowniſh in his Behaviour. He made many Scrapes and Bows, and whiſpered his Mother, (but ſo loud as to be heard by *Maria*)— "How handſome ſhe "is!"—His Mother, in the ſame Key, bid him hold his Tongue, which though he complied with, he frequently ſtole a Look at the fineſt Set of Features he had ever before ſeen, and by a hundred aukward Indications betrayed his Joy and Wonder at beholding ſo much Beauty, which he was as often about to break out in expreſſing.

Maria ſignified her Deſire to lie with *Lucy*, at which the Farmer and his Wife ſtared at each other wiſtfully, and the latter replied, ſhe had prepared the beſt Bed for her, and her Daughter's Room was not ſuitable to her Entertainment. *Maria* ſaid no more; and the Time of the Family's retiring being come, *Lucy* and her Mother attended her to her Chamber, where, wiſhing her a good Repoſe, they left her, after an emphatical Look from *Lucy*, and a gentle Preſſure of the Hand by *Maria*, which were not taken notice of by the old Woman.

Her Chamber was ſurrounded with antique Furniture; the carved Cheſts and Drawers reminded her of the ſubſtantial Days of our Forefathers, when Buildings and Furniture were provided for Poſterity, as well as their own Convenience. *Maria*, ſuſpecting

ſuſpecting all Things, and thinking there was ſomewhat odd in the Denial of her Lying with *Lucy*, took her Candle, and looked in every Corner of the extenſive Chamber, and under the Bed, for fear her Enemy ſhould be there concealed. There were two Cloſets, one of which was open, the other locked, which ſhe could not, therefore, inſpect; and the Faſtening of the Chamber-Door being very ſlight, ſhe at once reſolved not to undreſs herſelf, but to lie in her Clothes, between the Quilt and the Blankets; ſo very cautious the late Deceits had made her.

When ſhe had put out the Candle, a Croud of melancholy Thoughts ruſhed into her Mind, and fortunately kept her waking; for ſhe had not been laid down above an Hour before ſhe heard a Door open, and the Treading of ſome Perſon in the Room: Starting up, and holding open the Curtain, ſhe perceived it was a Man, by the gloomy Light the Window conveyed. She called out, in great Terror, and enquired who was there, but received no Anſwer, and a Moment after felt ſomebody in the Action of opening the Bed-Clothes, on the oppoſite Side of the Bed, and ſoon after heard him fling himſelf into it, and perceived an Arm endeavouring to graſp her; upon which ſhe ſprung off the Bed, and ſcreamed out moſt piteouſly, calling for Help, in a plaintive Tone, to *Lucy*, who had informed her ſhe lay in the next Room. She had

alſo

alſo unlocked the Door, when ſhe was ſeized behind, and ſuddenly, before ſhe could recollect herſelf to make Reſiſtance, hurried back to the Bed, and ſuch Liberties made uſe of, as ſoon recalled her Strength; and ſhe reſiſted, with more Obſtinacy than could well be expected from her delicate Frame, the Attacks of this Midnight Raviſher. But all her Efforts muſt have been inſufficient, had not Providence ſent her a timely Succour: *Lucy*, who had been kept waking, by thinking over *Maria*'s Story, heard her Cries, and immediately jumping out of Bed, and ſlipping on her Petticoats, waked her Brother, who lay in an adjacent Room, and alſo bounced at her Father's Chamber-Door; but hearing a great Buſtle in *Maria*'s Chamber, and her Cries, though fainter, ſtill continuing, notwithſtanding the Endeavours made uſe of to ſtop her Mouth, ſhe ran wildly, and ſcared out of her Wits, into the Room, which the unknown Aſſailant had been too much engaged, to think of faſtening again, and directly to the Bed, crying out, "Mur-"der! help! Oh! the Lady is murdered." By this Time *Roger*, her Brother, half equipped, turned to the ſame Place, directed by his Ears, and armed with a large Oaken Towel in one Hand, his other holding a Candle, which he had haſtily lighted at the Embers of the Kitchen-Fire. The Light ſoon diſcovered the whole Scene: A Man naked in his Shirt lay upon the Bed,

but,

but, at the Appearance of the Light, had quitted his Hold of *Maria*, who inſtantly fainted in the Arms of *Lucy*, which were luckily ſtretched out to receive her; her Head-Dreſs and Handkerchief torn off, and her Gown rent almoſt off her Back. *Roger* ſaw this with a Mixture of Rage and Pity, and at once levelled a Blow at her Enemy, which laid him flat upon the Bed, and which he was too much ſpent, with his late Exerciſe, to ward off. He would certainly have repeated the Blow, if his Father and Mother had not that Inſtant entered the Room, the former of whom caught his Hand, whilſt the latter ran to *Maria* and her Daughter, and cried out, "Ah! I thought what would come "of ſuch clandeſtine Doings: As to the "Gentleman, he is rightly ſerved; but the "poor Lady is in ſtrong Convulſions." *Holmes* looked much mortified, as well as his Wife, and, running to the Bed, did what he could to revive the Raviſher, who, though the Blood ran down his Face, was ſoon recovered enough to call for his Clothes, and was led out by the Farmer to another Room, curſing and threatening Vengeance on *Roger*, at a great Rate, who replied, "I don't "know who you are, but Father may do "as he pleaſe—mayhap he knows you—"for my Part, I am ready to give thee a "Touch of the ſame Tune whenever thou "liſteſt."—"Hold your Tongue, Block-"head, can't you?" the Mother halloo'd out, "'tis the Gentleman that came with

"Landlord, and this is his Wife:—You "Oaf! how ſhould he have come here if "we had not permitted it?"—"Wounds! "then, Mother, it is a bad Affair. I'll "be horſe-whipped naked if ſhe's his Wife "at all; and thoff I ſay it, that ſhould "not, you may be aſhamed to let him "uſe the Woman ſo.—She married! If "ever Man touched her before, I'll die a "thouſand Deaths.—No—no, you're all "wrong, I warrant ye."

Poor *Lucy* could only weep and lament over her new Acquaintance, who was now laid on the Bed, and Water thrown in her Face to recover her: But the Embraces and Lamentations of that tender Maid more contributed to her Recovery than any other Means; ſhe laid *Maria*'s Head upon her Boſom, whilſt the Tears trickled from her own Face on hers. At length, after a deep Sigh, ſhe opened her Eyes, and fixing them on *Lucy*, threw her Arms about her Neck; a Flood of Tears ſucceeding, perfectly brought her to herſelf; and ſhe then recollected by whoſe Interpoſition ſhe eſcaped the late Danger, which ſwelled her Boſom with Sentiments of Gratitude to *Lucy*, of which ſhe gave her abundant Teſtimonies, whilſt, though conſcious that her Mother muſt be privy to the Attempt upon her, ſhe forbore any harſh Expreſſions, contenting herſelf with uttering her Grief, without indulging her Reſentment. *Lucy* now inſiſted ſhe ſhould go with her to her own

Chamber, and lie with her the Remainder of the Night, to which her Mother conſenting, they were guarded to it by honeſt *Roger*, who was not a little proud of his Office, and of the Heroic Feat he had performed. Here *Maria* repeated her Acknowledgements to her Friend, and told her, ſhe made no Doubt her Raviſher was Lord *Belvidere*, though ſhe had not been able to diſtinguiſh him in the Dark; and if, ſeeing a Cloſet locked, in which ſhe had no Doubt he was concealed, ſhe had not taken the Precaution to ſleep in her Clothes, her Ruin muſt have been inevitable. Obſerving the tender Creature's Face was ſuffuſed with Bluſhes, and gueſſing the Occaſion, ſhe was willing to remove her Confuſion by continuing, "I muſt think, if your Fa-
"ther and Mother were ſenſible of his
"Baſeneſs, and that he has no Manner of
"Claim to me, they would never have
"countenanced ſuch an Attack; but, my
"*Lucy*, the wiſeſt Perſons are not always
"guarded againſt the Artifices of the Kna-
"viſh and the Deſigning; and therefore
"they muſt be pitied for their Credulity, let
"me have ſuffered by it ever ſo much;
"though, with Thanks to Providence, I
"do not find myſelf any otherwiſe affect-
"ed, than by the Fatigue and Waſte of
"Spirits I have undergone." *Lucy* ſeemed to take this kind Apology for her Parents very gratefully. "Alas! Miſs," ſhe anſwered, "I am ſure they have been im-

" poſed upon by the Gentleman, otherwiſe " they could never have introduced him in- " to your Chamber, but imagining he was " your Huſband, thought they were guilty " of no Crime in bringing you together. " I only fear for them (though indeed they " are highly culpable) on account of the " Blow that my Brother gave the Gentle- " man; for as he is ſo intimate with my " Father's Landlord, in all Likelihood they " may feel his Reſentment, ſome way or " other, on his Account." This was the firſt Intelligence *Maria* could receive of *Roger*'s Behaviour, which ſhe bleſſed him for in her Heart, and ſaid every thing that ſhe imagined would calm poor *Lucy*'s Apprehenſions, hoping it would be in her Power to recompenſe them both for the Regard they had ſhewn her.

" I perceive," *Lucy* rejoined, " there can " be no Safety for you here; for, I am " ſorry to ſay it, my Father himſelf is " not able to reſiſt the tempting Bait, call- " ed *Money:* Therefore, dear Miſs, I muſt " endeavour to forward your Eſcape To- " morrow; and this is my Plan for that " Purpoſe.

" I would have you accept any Excuſes " that may be made you for this Night's " Affair, and pretend to be ill, in order to " protract your Stay another Day. *Roger* " ſhall be let into the Secret; for his Heart " is good, and he ſeems to be much ta- " ken with you, and ſhall contrive to ſtay

" at home, and to protect you from Inſult
" in my Abſence. I will go over to Parſon
" *Burnet*, who lives but a Mile further, is
" Miniſter of our Pariſh, my Godfather,
" and an excellent Man, doing a Power of
" Good. He has a Daughter, about our
" Age, who is as good as her Father; and
" his being Chaplain to Lady *Latimer*, who
" lives about five Miles from hence, and is
" Miſtreſs of the largeſt Eſtate hereabout,
" gives him a great Intereſt in her. She is
" a Woman of a very religious Turn, a
" great Friend to the Clergy, and does ma-
" ny Acts of Charity all about. She por-
" tions young Maidens, ſets their Huſ-
" bands up in Buſineſs, and is a great Ene-
" my to Sir *Thomas Jones*, on account of
" his looſe Manners, and his vile De-
" baucheries. I will go early in the Morn-
" ing, under Pretence of carrying him ſome
" new Cream, (which I often do) and tell
" him your Diſtreſs, and the Deſigns againſt
" you, and beg him to receive you into his
" Houſe, till you can be otherwiſe provided
" for; and perhaps he may recommend
" you to her Ladyſhip, which will be a
" good Thing indeed, and ſecure your Peace
" entirely; beſide, I ſhall then have the
" Happineſs ſometimes to ſee you; for I
" never loved any body better, though our
" Acquaintance has been of ſo ſhort a
" Standing. My Father and Mother are
" to be at Farmer *Rawlins*'s Chriſtening,
" who lives hard by; and, as I ſhall re-

" turn with all Speed, if the Parſon con-
" ſents to receive you, *Roger* ſhall take you
" on Horſeback behind him, and carry you,
" by a private Way he is acquainted with,
" to his Houſe; and when he returns, we
" will pretend you went away whilſt we
" were about our Buſineſs, we don't know
" which Way, or whither to. Say, dear
" Miſs, if this is not a good Scheme, and
" whether you approve of it?"

Maria, ſurpriſed and charmed at the Friendſhip of this lovely Maid, embraced her with the utmoſt Thankfulneſs for her Propoſal, and agreed to it without Heſitation; only ſhe told her ſhe feared for her's and her Brother's Safety, the Danger they ran being all that could deter her: But *Lucy* ſoon eaſed her of thoſe Fears, by aſſuring her they could poſſibly incur no Harm, as ſhe was ſenſible, if it was found out to be their Contrivance, when her Father and Mother were convinced of the Injuſtice done her, they would applaud rather than blame them; and her being received at the Parſon's, or Lady *Latimer*'s, would be to them a convincing Proof how much ſhe had been injured.

Sleep did not cloſe their Eyes till towards Morning, when they fell into a Doſe, from which the Sun's Appearance at his Riſing waked them to the arduous Undertakings of the enſuing Day. *Lucy* then aroſe, and going down Stairs, informed her Mother how ill *Maria* had been all Night, and beg-

ged she might not be disturbed. Her Mother expressed much Concern for her, and went up to see and desire to know what she would have, telling her she was extremely sorry for the Occasion of her Illness; that it was a Trick played them by a young Gentleman of the Neighbourhood, who had accidentally seen her at her Arrival; but that he appeared sincerely sorry for his Fault, begged her Pardon, and was now confined to his Bed by the Wound which her Son had so justly given him; and she might depend upon it, no further Hurt should be offered her whilst she was under their Roof; and, when she was able, her Husband should carry her to Lady *Aimwell*'s.

Though *Maria* knew all this to be false, or at least the greatest Part of it, she returned her Thanks for her Kindness, and seemed to have no Suspicion of the Part she and her Husband had acted, though her own Account was so contradictory to common Sense. She begged a Cup of Tea, (which was brought her) and to be left to her Repose.

Presently after, *Lucy* entered her Chamber, and seating herself by the Bed-side, informed her, that she had made *Roger* a zealous Partizan in her Cause; that he heard her Story with great Concern, and said he would die before he would see her injured; and that he would not be far from her till she returned. She then told her, that she was sure it was Lord *Belvidere* who attacked her the

the Night before; and that, having perſuaded them her Malady was ſuch as to deny him her Embraces, (the Renewal of which he imagined would contribute to her Recovery) they had been drawn into a Conſent of his being placed in the Cloſet, which ſhe had found locked, and which had a Slip-Lock put on on the Inſide; that her Father at firſt made ſome Objection, and particularly expreſſed his Wonder that his Friend Sir *Thomas*'s Houſe was not pitched upon for theſe Purpoſes; but he was anſwered, that Sir *Thomas*'s Mother, who reſided with him, (and was as preciſe as her Son was libertine) was a Bar to that; that *Belvidere* was enraged at the Blow received from her Brother, and ſwore they had informed their Children, and laid a Plot to diſappoint him in his Intention, for which he would be revenged; but had been pacified by their Reaſons, and was then really ill at Sir *Thomas*'s; that a Surgeon had been ſent for to the next Town to bleed him and dreſs his Wound, who ordered him not to ſtir out for a Day or two; that, in conſequence, he ſent Orders to keep her ſafe till he was able to come down, and that her pretended Illneſs ſeemed to give them Pleaſure, as they could have a Pretence to detain her without Suſpicion or Conſtraint; that they were both only ſorry for their Concern in the Affair, were much prejudiced in her Favour, and ſhe believed, if the Money had been out of the Queſtion, would rejoice to contribute to

her Eſcape. "So, my dear Friend," added *Lucy*, "you ſee every thing contributes "to your Relief. I leave you, full of Af-"fection, to ſerve you, and ſhall be impa-"tient to return with good Tidings." They then embraced and parted, *Maria* bleſſing her for her virtuous Intention, and praying Heaven for Succeſs on her Endeavours.

She perceived that *Roger*, during his Siſter's Abſence, kept due Watch and Ward over her, by hearing his Footſteps, as he often paſſed by her Chamber-Door, and ſhe could ſee him every now and then open it, to look towards the Bed with great Concern and Attention. As her preſent Poſture ſeemed more to favour the Opinion of her being ill, than if ſhe ſat up, ſhe choſe to continue it; but the old Woman and her Maids were ſo very aſſiduous in bringing her up one Slop or other, that ſhe was forced at laſt to get up in her own Defence, for fear of being drenched to Death with their Kindneſs.

She found a good Fire in the Parlour, by which ſhe ſat down, pretending to be very weak, and hardly able to ſtand, the honeſt *Roger* having joyfully met her at her Chamber-Door, and led her down, whiſpering, that he hoped to be a good Way off wi'her before Night. The young Man expreſſed ſo much Readineſs to ſerve his new Miſtreſs, that he would ſuffer no one to bring her any thing but himſelf, ſo that *Maria* overheard his Mother ſay,---"This Gentlewoman, I

"think,

" think, i' faith, has bewitched my Chil-
" dren; *Roger* and *Lucy* were never ſo con-
" formable before, though I have had as
" good People at my Houſe too. She is
" very good-tempered and pretty, I will ſay,
" and one cannot help loving her.—As to
" *Lucy*, ſhe is ſtark-mad for her Intereſt, I
" ſee plainly.---I wiſh ſhe were well at
" home with her Huſband.---Well, for my
" Part, I am quite tired of ſuch Squabbles
" between Man and Wife, and wiſh I was
" fairly out of the Scrape."

Maria thought every Minute an Hour whilſt *Lucy* was abſent, as ſhe conceived this to be the critical Time that was either to free her from, or perpetuate her Misfortunes. In the Conflict of her Mind, ſhe had little Occaſion to feign Illneſs; ſhe was really in a truly pitiable Condition; torn by every painful Senſation that could ariſe from uncertain, yet flattering Hope, and real Fear. If ſhe had any little Relief from theſe Thoughts, it aroſe from the aukward, but ſincere Endeavours of honeſt *Roger* to entertain her. He gazed at her frequently with ſuch Wiſtfulneſs, that it often put her out of Countenance, and as often he paſſed his ruſtic Encomiums on her Beauty. He entertained her with the Hiſtory of all the Families of the Hamlet, and concluded with telling her he liked her better than all the Women in it put together.

From this ſtrange Dialogue ſhe was, in about three Hours, releaſed by the Arrival

of *Lucy*; and from the firſt Glance ſhe caſt at *Maria* that young Lady gueſſed ſhe had been ſucceſsful in her Application to Mr. *Burnet*. "Is it done?" ſays *Roger*, the Minute ſhe entered the Room.--- "Hush! "Fool," replied *Lucy*, "though we are "obliged to you for your earneſt Deſire for "my Succeſs, yet you'll ruin us by diſ- "covering it, if you hav'n't Care. Go, "go, and ſee the Coaſt is clear till I report "the Iſſue of my Walk, and remember "you are to conduct this good young Lady "to the Parſon's, upon *Dobin* or *Whits-* "*foot*, as ſoon as Father and Mother are "gone to the Chriſtening." *Roger* was ſo overjoyed with this Intelligence, that he was near upon hallooing aloud; and it was with ſome Difficulty that *Maria* and his Siſter could moderate his Satisfaction to a Degree ſuitable to the Buſineſs in hand.

Maria, as ſoon as they were alone, embraced the amiable, friendly Girl, and cried, "My *Lucy*, my dear *Lucy*, do you really "bring me ſuch agreeable Tidings as you "have juſt now hinted? Shall I find an "Aſylum from the cruel Purſuits of that "Wretch, and eſcape his Wiles and Stra- "tagems?"--- "Yes, my dear Friend," *Lucy* replied, "(I find I muſt be ſo free as "to call you ſo) but I'll tell you, in Order, "what has happened.

"Mr. *Burnet* was not out of Bed when I "firſt arrived at his Houſe; but his good- "natured Daughter was at Work in the

"Parlour,

" Parlour, and welcomed my Arrival with " her uſual Kindneſs. Obſerving I was " hot, and in a great Taking, (for I had " walked as faſt as my Legs could carry me) " ſhe brought me a Glaſs of Wine and a " Bit of Cake, which, as ſoon as I had re- " freſhed myſelf with, I began to tell her " your Story; and though I told nothing " but what I have obſerved myſelf, and " know to be true, ſhe is perfectly in love " with the Thoughts of having ſo agreeable " a Companion. When her Father came " down to Breakfaſt, (which he never does " till he has been an Hour in his Cloſet) ſhe " repeated all I had told her, and ſtrength- " ened my Deſire by adding her own, that " he would take you under his Care and " Protection. Dear Madam, I cannot tell " you the reſt without Confuſion; but " I'm willing you ſhould hear all that paſſ- " ed, Word for Word.

" After a little Conſideration, he ſaid,--- " My beſt *Lucy*, how pleaſed am I to ob- " ſerve in you ſo much Generoſity and " Compaſſion! which proves, my Inſtruc- " tions have not been thrown away upon " you, and the native and genuine Good- " neſs of your Diſpoſition. Amazing, that " Patrons of Innocence and oppreſſed Vir- " tue ſhould riſe up, where, as is plain " from your infatuated Father and Mother, " it could be ſo little expected! My Dear, " your amiable Behaviour to this unfortu- " nate young Gentlewoman, and that of

" your

" your Brother, deſerve more Encomiums
" than we have Time to beſtow upon it:
" But, believe me, it ſhall not go unre-
" warded. I will receive her with Pleaſure
" from your Repreſentation of her Caſe. I
" know how wicked a Man (and am ſin-
" cerely concerned for it) Sir *Thomas* is,
" and muſt have therefore no good Opinion
" of his Companions. Strangers to Vir-
" tue, their whole infernal Delight is to ren-
" der Families unhappy by their Debauch-
" eries. I ſincerely pity the unfortunate
" young Creature, and if I cannot enſure
" her Safety here, ſhall have Intereſt enough
" with Lady *Latimer* to obtain her Protec-
" tion. Your Application to me particu-
" larly in ſuch a Caſe, as it is a Proof of
" your Regard for me, and Confidence in
" me, gives me much Satisfaction. Yes,
" my *Lucy*, we cannot employ our Time
" and Abilities to better Purpoſe, than to
" relieve our ſuffering Fellow-Creatures.
" God looks upon ſuch a Temper of Mind
" with peculiar Benignity, and will bleſs it
" with Happineſs and Proſperity. Return,
" my Child, and put your laudable Scheme
" in Execution, and tell your Friend my
" whole Intereſt ſhall be employed to re-
" dreſs her Wrongs, and to ſecure her a
" ſafe Retreat."

" You may judge, Miſs, how rejoiced I
" was at this Aſſurance, and how many
" Ways I teſtified my Gratitude; for I be-
" gin to find more and more, I cannot be

" eaſy

"easy whilst you are unhappy. We will "only wait till my Father and Mother go "out, and then you need not fear but my "Brother will safely carry you to Mr. *Bur-*"*net's*, where I shall have the Pleasure to "see you free from Fear or Disturbance. "Indeed, indeed, dear Miss, I cannot tell "you what Delight the Prospect of your "Deliverance gives me!"—Here the worthy Maid shed Tears of Joy; and *Maria* embracing her over and over, and in perfect Admiration of her generous Sentiments and affectionate Carriage towards her, vowed a perpetual Friendship, and assured her she should never forget her Obligations; that she was grieved it was not in her Power at present to reward, as it deserved, such exalted, and such extraordinary Merit as she was possessed of; but, if sharing her Heart could be looked upon as any Recompence, she should ever retain the warmest Place therein. In short, she said, and with so many winning Graces, so much to testify her Gratitude, that *Lucy* begged her to desist; adding, it was a Recompence for all her Pains, that she received them with so much Pleasure.

By this Time Dinner was brought in, and Mr. *Holmes* and his Wife, and *Roger*, sat down with them to a more than ordinary plentiful Table, which seemed to be served in Profusion to honour their Guest, and perhaps with a View to make her amends for the late Adventure.

Maria

Maria, ſtill pretending herſelf to be very weak, yet, as her Mind was now more at Eaſe, ſaid and did every thing ſhe could to convince them how much ſhe thought herſelf indebted to them; and, indeed, reflecting how they had been deceived, rather pitied than blamed them, for a Conduct which the Merit of their Children had nearly effaced from her Memory.

After Dinner, they informed her they were to ſpend the reſt of the Day at a Neighbour's, and did not doubt their Son and *Lucy* would endeavour to ſupply their Place, and render the Remainder of the Day agreeable to her. "Never fear, Father," *Roger*, with a ſhrewd Look, replied, "mayhap ſhe "may be better pleaſed with our Company "than you imagine. Go when you will, "I warrant you we'll take Care ſhe ſhall "have Entertainment enough, perhaps bet-"ter than you can think of." *Maria* and *Lucy* were almoſt put into a cold Sweat by this Sally of the honeſt Youth, which, however, was paſſed over without any particular Notice by his Parents, who ſoon after ſet out upon their intended Viſit, and left them to execute their Plan of Operations.

When they had been gone about an Hour, *Roger*, who was very alert, came in and let them know he had ſaddled *Dobin*, as being the beſt-going Beaſt they had, and placed the ſofteſt Pillion he could find in the Houſe upon him; that he would lead him round to the Back of the Orchard, and wait

their

their Coming, none of the Servants being employed on that Side of the Houſe; then, with a joyous Exultation, told *Maria* he'd ſee her ſafe, or loſe his Life for her Sake, though he ſhould have been much better pleaſed if ſhe could have always ſtaid where ſhe was. *Lucy* had already bundled up *Maria*'s Wardrobe, and directly, unperceived by any one, ran with it to the Place which *Roger* had appointed, and returning, propoſed aloud, that the Servants might hear in the Kitchen, to her Friend, to take a Walk in the Garden, which ſhe had never yet ſeen, ſince ſhe had honoured them with her Company. Arm in Arm, they went out at the Back-Door, and, after ſauntering for ſome Minutes, walked towards the Orchard, *Maria* obſerving, as ſhe went, that ſhe looked upon the whole Manner of her Eſcape to be providential; "particularly, my *Lucy*," ſays ſhe, "that Heaven-directed Tender-"neſs that inſpired your Heart towards an "unhappy Stranger: And would not one "think it ſtrange that Mr. *Holmes* ſhould "leave me at full Liberty with you, when "it muſt be ſuppoſed, conſidering the Man-"ner of my being decoyed from *London*, "that he muſt have ſtrict Orders to the "contrary? But indeed, thinking me ſtill "under the Deluſion of going to Lady "*Aimwell*'s, they could have no Suſpicion "of my intending to fly, or that their "Children would connive at it, who, as "well as themſelves, were prepoſſeſſed by

"the

" the Story told them by Lord *Belvidere*,
" and averred by *Jones*, which, no doubt,
" they firmly believe themſelves, and ima-
" gine you do ſo too. A little Time will
" open their Eyes; nay, perhaps the out-
" rageous Behaviour of the two Ruffians
" may deſtroy their Credit with them en-
" tirely; and, on that Account, I rejoice
" that your Father has no Obligations, as
" you tell me, to his Landlord; for, believe
" me, *Lucy*, Men of bad Principles ſtick
" at no Miſchief, and are as mercileſs as
" the Tyger that prowls the Deſert. I
" pray Heaven, you and your kind Bro-
" ther may not incur any Anger upon my
" Account; the Thought of your being
" ſeverely treated is a great Affliction to
" me: But, my Friend, my amiable *Lucy*,
" let me hear from you, or ſee you, To-
" Morrow, or your Brother, that I may
" know the worſt that can happen to me,
" or if I may really indulge a ſincere Joy
" for my Delivery, unaccompanied by cruel
" Regrets for my generous Friends." *Lucy* endeavoured to diſpel her Fears for her Safety, and promiſed to be at Mr. *Burnet*'s ſome Time the next Day. And now they were arrived at the End of the Orchard, where *Roger* eagerly waited to receive his Charge. Taking a tender Adieu of the amiable *Lucy*, and both ſhedding Tears at parting, ſhe, by the Help of that Maid, was ſeated behind the Brother, who had braced her Bundle before him; and immediately they

they ſet off at a good round Trot, *Lucy* following them with a Thouſand Wiſhes for her ſafe Arrival; and ſhe and *Maria* mutually gazing at each other, till the envious Diſtance prevented them this Indulgence of their Affection.

Roger frequently aſked after her Health, during the little Journey; and as often, if ſhe ſat eaſily, and, if not, offered to get down and lead the Horſe. As he went through a Number of Fields, and two or three private Lanes, which carried them near two Miles out of the direct Road, fearing he ſhould be ſeen by ſomebody or other, who might give Intelligence of the Route they took, they were full an Hour before they arrived at Mr. *Burnet*'s Houſe, where *Roger* alighting, led *Dobin* round the Houſe to the Garden-Gate, at which that Gentleman and his Daughter, who had ſeen them at ſome Diſtance, ſtood ready to receive their Gueſt.

As ſoon as ſhe was helped from her Horſe by the united Civility of Mr. *Burnet* and *Roger*, ſhe made a moſt genteel Apology for the Trouble ſhe was about to give to a worthy Family; whilſt the Parſon and his Daughter, ſurpriſed with her engaging Preſence, delicate Features, and harmonious Voice, were for ſome Time incapable of anſwering her; for though *Lucy* had ſaid ſuch advantageous Things of her, and had deſcribed her to them as a Paragon of Perfection, ſhe ſurpaſſed all their Expectations, and

at

at once commanded their Reſpect. Miſs *Burnet* firſt found her Tongue, and taking her by the Hand, "Dear Miſs, no Apologies;—your Diſtreſs was a ſufficient Recommendation to our Friendſhip; but you are poſſeſſed of ſo many other Claims to Eſteem, that I imagine ourſelves, rather than you, will appear to be the obliged Parties, by your dwelling with us." Mr. *Burnet*, who, as they walked before him, admired the Dignity of her whole Perſon, inforced what his Daughter ſaid, and moſt cordially promiſed to take care of her Welfare; whilſt *Roger*, bearing her Bundle, followed chuckling, and to the laſt Degree delighted with the Compliments he heard on both Sides. *Maria*, who did not ſee him, and whoſe Gratitude to him and his Siſter was not to be repreſſed, completed his Felicity by turning about, and with great Sweetneſs hoped he was not departed without taking Leave of her, and carrying her Love to the moſt endearing Creature that ever exiſted. "No, no, Miſs," Mr. *Burnet* replied, "here's my worthy Lad; we can't part with him ſo; his good Heart, I ſee, is like his Siſter's, and God will bleſs him here, and reward him hereafter for it."

When they entered this neat Villa, the Decorations and Furniture of which diſplayed the correct and diſcerning Taſte of the Poſſeſſor, he handed *Maria* into an elegant Parlour, and Miſs *Burnet* brought her ſome

ſome Wine and Sweetmeats to refreſh her after her Ride; nor was *Roger* forgot, but ſupplied with what he choſe to regale himſelf with before his Return home, which he ſignified muſt be ſpeedy, and which *Maria*, fearful for him and his Siſter, hurried him to as much as poſſible. She ſent her kindeſt Reſpects to her *Lucy*, preſſed the Hand of *Roger*, with moſt affectionate Thanks for his Civility; and he departed, highly gratified by the Diſtinction ſhewn him.

Maria, Mr. *Burnet*, and his Daughter, now left to themſelves, the charming Maid was again about to reſume the Subject of her Acknowledgements for their Favour in compaſſionately thus admitting a Stranger into their Houſe, when the Bell was rung at the Gate with great Precipitation, as it ſhould ſeem; and thereupon the trembling *Maria*, whoſe Fears were all revived, would have flown out of the Room; but Mr. *Burnet* ſtopped and calmed her ſudden Perturbations, by aſſuring her it was a Reverend Dean, a Friend of his, who had promiſed him the Favour of ſpending the Evening, and lodging with him that Night. Making ſome Apology for this Interruption, ſhe reſumed her Seat, Miſs *Burnet* having quitted the Room to receive their Viſitor, who was alſo met in the Court-Yard by Mr. *Burnet*, and conducted into the Parlour. At the Entrance of this Gentleman, *Maria* aroſe to receive and return his Compliments, when advancing

advancing to her, he exclaimed, in an Accent of great Surprise, " Heavens! is it " possible!---Miss *Maria!*---Happy, happy " Hour, which convinces me still more and " more, that Virtue is always protected by " Providence!"

End of VOLUME I.

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